



FIRST MEMPHIS

A Different Way to be Baptist

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Together

Vol 35 No 1

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Arise, Shine!

REV. BRITTANY STILLWELL, ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF WORSHIP & YOUTH

It has always seemed fitting to me that Epiphany Sunday fall at the beginning of our calendar year. As we stare down the unknown to come in the year ahead of us, we need to be reminded that the light of God shines just bright enough to light our way. And who better to do that for us than the prophet Isaiah:

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has

REMINDERS

Tuesday, January 1

The Church office will be closed. Happy New Year!

Sunday, January 6, 9 am

First Cup Gathering

Sunday, January 27, following worship

Annual Church Conference

A Letter to the Congregation

from Rev. Brittany Stillwell
can be read on page 5.

Meet **Dr. Randy L. Hyde** our
new Supply Pastor on page 3.

Read **Clay Wilson's** letter to
the congregation on page 2.

Holly Hatton is our new
Interim Children and Youth
Ministry Coordinator. Learn
more on page 4.

risen upon you. For thick darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will appear over you. Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms.

Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you. (Isaiah 60:1-6)

Isaiah is not looking around and describing what everyone else sees. Instead, Isaiah comes near to God and God comes near to Isaiah until he begins to see what God sees. The role of a prophet is to reorient us toward a better future. The prophets have developed the courage, faith, and wisdom to imagine and call forward the world God desires to make; a world where God's light radiates through everything. They are beginning to see what God sees—a world and a people being steadily transformed, redeemed, made whole. The work of the prophet is not to paint impossible and

impractical pictures that will surely fail. No, prophets are tasked with being the a voice that cracks through the despair, loneliness, selfishness, greed, and all the things that bind us, to break open in us a place for God's light. They are the ones to announce, "Arise, shine, for your light has come!"

And though we are not exactly like the people to whom Isaiah is speaking, I think his words still ring true. We, too, long for things to return to normal. We long for home and we have different visions of what that looks like. Everywhere we look it seems that injustice and famine, poverty and shame seem to be more plentiful in our world than prosperity, life, abundance, and honor. Sometimes, instead of joyful reunions, we find ourselves splintering and arguing. First Baptist doesn't look like the church our parents and grandparents knew and sometimes there are mixed emotions as we look around at who we are becoming. There is much pain and darkness in our community and world, and at times it is tempting to wonder whether God is really alive, or really all that powerful, or really even cares.

Continued on page 6

INTERIM

AS FBC TRANSITIONS

LETTER FROM CLAY WILSON, DEACON CHAIR

It is no secret that change often causes anxiety. It is also no secret that First Baptist Church of Memphis is going through a lot of change right now.

But there is a “secret weapon” against anxiety – which really shouldn’t be a secret, at all. In Philippians 4:6, the Apostle Paul exhorts, “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (NKJV).

In this spirit, your Church leadership asks that we embark on a season of prayer for the future of FBC Memphis. We ask that, in the immediate future, the Congregation pray individually for the Church and its lay leadership as we go through this time of transition. Please pray for wisdom, guidance and direction, that God will lead this Church in the path He wants us to follow.

We will also be looking at opportunities for more structured,

corporate prayer in the coming weeks.

After prayer, another antidote for anxiety is preparation. Our Personnel Committee, led by Chairman Richard Wright, has been hard at work in recent weeks seeking to secure short-term ministerial solutions, as well as looking to the longer term.

On page 3, you will see a bio of the person who will fill our pulpit on a regular basis while we evaluate options for an Intentional Interim Pastor who will help us prepare for our Senior Pastor Search. The Personnel Committee is also pursuing solutions for the Church’s Music, Youth and Children’s programs.

Your Deacon and Personnel leaders will provide you with periodic updates on the status of our ministerial positions.

We would be remiss, obviously, if we failed to thank our outgoing

ministers for all the hard work they have put into First Baptist Church of Memphis. While others in the Congregation are working on plans for more formal recognitions, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rev. Dr. David Breckenridge and Rev. Brittany Stillwell for all the time, talent, sweat, tears, prayers and – above all – love that they have put into FBC in their time here.

We will certainly miss them, but we certainly pray God’s blessing upon them as they enter the next phases of their lives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank you, the Congregation, for your time, participation, financial support and prayers. You are the Church, and your faithfulness is what has allowed FBC Memphis to carry on for nearly 200 years – and, by God’s grace – will carry it into the future.

WEATHER

First Baptist Church’s Inclement Weather Policy

WHAT TO EXPECT ON SUNDAYS AND DURING THE WEEK

During the next couple of months, it is good to be reminded of our church’s inclement weather policy. If the Shelby County Schools are closed, our office is closed. If the county schools close (or close early) on a Wednesday, there will be no activities at church that evening. Stay home and stay safe!

If bad weather occurs on Sundays, we will try our best to get here and conduct a morning worship service (regardless of the weather). We will try to be sure that

the service is broadcast live on radio (ESPN 680 AM and ESPN 92.9 FM). If you can safely get here, do come, but please do not take any chances. And remember that if it is icy, the walk from your car to the church door can be hazardous. Your safety is the most important thing to us.

In the case of weather problems, we plan to list our church’s status on the local TV stations, our Facebook page, and leave a message on the church answering machine.

INTERIM

Introducing Dr. Randy Hyde

FBC'S SUPPLY PASTOR

During this time of transition, from where we are now to finding a senior pastor, we will go through several healthy steps. The obvious first step is pulpit supply.

The Personnel Committee thinks it is best to have a consistent voice from the pulpit from one individual, while allowing other voices from our own membership and community to preach from time to time as well. This person would fill our pulpit for a few months as we locate an intentional interim pastor.

FBC Personnel Committee is thrilled to say that we have found a pulpit supply minister who will begin his journey with First Baptist on Sunday January 20. Dr. Randy Hyde will serve as our pulpit supply pastor for the next few months

Randy L. Hyde is a retired Baptist minister. Most recently, he was pastor of the Pulaski Heights Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas for almost 22 years.

Dr. Hyde is an Arkansan, but has pastored churches in Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, and Florida as well as his native state.

He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and holds his doctorate from the Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, Tennessee.

In 2005 he published *After God's*

Own Heart: The Life and Faith of David. His most recent book from 2010 is *Feminine Faces: Portraits of Biblical Women of Faith*, and he is currently completing two other manuscripts, one on the life of Joseph and the other on the great hymns of our faith.

Randy and his wife Janet have been married since 1970 and have two adult children: Emily Rebecca Hyde Newberry lives in Macon, Georgia with her husband Raines and sons Alex and Matthew; Timothy Andrew Hyde resides in Little Rock with his wife Kathryn. They are the parents of Charley Russell and Molly Mac.

Dr. Hyde is Past President of the Rotary Club of Little Rock (Club 99), and has served on the National Coordinating Council and Ministries Council of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, as well as several boards in the Little Rock area.

He enjoys sports, especially golf, reading, photography, and playing the guitar occasionally (for his own edification only!).



MEMORIALS

In memory of **Carol Weiss** by

Ms. Ann Powell
Mr. & Mrs. Mark Smith

In memory of **Sylvia Black** by

Mr. & Mrs. Mark Smith

In memory of **Mr. & Mrs. D. L. Valentine** by

Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Valentine

In memory of **Becky Remakulus** by

Ms. Mary Ann Ready

HONORARIA

In honor of **David Breckenridge** by

Ms. Jimmie Harris

CHURCH

Holiday Office Schedule

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED ON JAN. 1

The church office will be closed for New Year's Day, Tuesday, January 1.

Our Adult Game Day events on Thursdays will resume Thursday, January 3.

Stay tuned for more information about our Fellowship Suppers in January.

INTERIM

Introducing Holly Hatton

FBC'S INTERIM CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR



Beginning January 7, our church will welcome an Interim Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator.

Holly Hatton has accepted the call to serve in this new role. Holly's lifelong dedication and love for our church provides our children and youth a steady presence during this time of transition.

She has experience teaching children and youth and a passion for caring for others.

Please join us in welcoming Holly and in supporting this vital ministry of our church.

YOUTH

Youth Lock-in

FRIDAY, JAN. 4, 7 PM-6 AM

Youth will gather for our yearly Lock-in frivolities January 4.

If you would like to volunteer to stay up with the youth, [contact Brittany](#).

ADVENT

Advent Snapshots



YOUTH

Youth Bible Study

SUNDAYS, 5-7 PM

The youth will resume meeting on Sunday nights on January 6 for Bible Study—this is precious time with them as we bond and dig deeper into scripture and prayer.

We will need dinners Sunday nights and would love for you to help! You can prepare dinner as an individual or with your Sunday School class.

[Contact Brittany](#) to sign up and to get a list of food ideas and available dates.

CHILDREN

Children's Missions

SECOND & FOURTH SUNDAYS, 4-5 PM

Children's Missions resumes in January, meeting the second and fourth Sundays of each month, from 4-5 pm.

If you are interested in teaching a session of our Children's Missions program, please [email April Blankenship](#).

This semester we will combine the Sr. Kindergarten – 5th grade groups.



FBC

Letter to the Congregation from Rev. Brittany Stillwell

BRITTANY'S LAST SUNDAY IS JANUARY 13

Dear church family,

A little over a year ago I shared with you about an encounter I had with Jacob in Genesis. Like Jacob, I was wrestling with God, trying to figure out what to do with this new phase of life that was forced upon me. As God gave Jacob the new name, Israel, I realized that I would be reclaiming my new, old name: Stillwell. It was a beautiful reminder that no matter what has happened or what is to come, I am still well.

This encounter in Genesis sent me back to the very beginning of the Bible, journeying slowly through the story of God's people. Eventually, I found myself in Exodus, distracted, like Moses, by a bush that was burning but not consumed. I don't know how long it took Moses to finally get up the guts to turn aside and investigate this fiery bush, but it took me a long time. I am happy and content here. I love my job, I love my church family, I love my life the way it is. I think I had a sense that even just looking would change everything. But when a position as a staff volunteer at Door of Hope in South Africa was presented to me, I

knew I had to turn aside to see what God was up to.

The rest of the story involves a lot of wandering in the wilderness and standing with Moses for a long time at the bank of the sea, waiting to see if the waters would part, not really sure I want them to because crossing over means leaving a lot of things I love behind and journeying into the scary unknown. I have struggled because I really don't want to leave here. Here, I get to serve God with people I love, in a city I love, but the waters have parted, the call has come, and I must follow. I am resigning as your Associate Pastor and will be going to South Africa at the end of January to serve as a staff volunteer, assisting with communications, storytelling, and pastoral care at Door of Hope in Johannesburg. My last Sunday will be January 13.

I realize the timing of all this is unsettling and scary and I deeply regret the way the timeline has unfolded. Richard Wright, our chair of personnel, and Clay Wilson, our chair of deacons, are already hard at work planning for the future and I am confident that the God who

makes beautiful things out of dust has been and is at work even now.

I can't say enough how grateful I am for the chance to serve with you. You have shown me in a very tangible way what the love of Christ looks like. You have been patient with me as I learned and grew as a minister and you have taught me what it means to love all of God's people through your courageous decisions and compassionate actions. But most importantly, you have encouraged me to listen deeply for the call of God. You have provided me with tools and experiences that have opened my heart up in ways I could never imagine. Thank you for giving me the space and the opportunity to discover who God is calling me to be and for doing your best to make sure that every step of the way I am still well.

As I go to serve in South Africa, I take you with me, very aware that, because of you, I have heard the call and have the courage to follow. I hope to make you proud.

I love you.

Brittany

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Arise, Shine, Continued from page 1

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And though we are not exactly like the people to whom Isaiah is

FBC

Annual Church Conference

JAN. 27, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Please mark your calendar for our **Annual Church Conference** on **Sunday, January 27** following morning worship.

At this time we will approve the 2019 Church Budget and approve new committee members.