



FIRST MEMPHIS

A Different Way to be Baptist

200 E. Parkway N.
Memphis, TN 38112-5414
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www.fbcmemphis.org

REMINDERS

Sunday, February 3, 9 am
First Cup Gathering

Sunday, February 10
Children's Valentine Art
Fundraiser for Missions

Meet **Dr. David Dennis**, our
Music Ministry Interim, on
page 2.

Read **Rev. Brittany Stillwell's**
thank you note on page 3.

Learn more about who to
contact during the **Interim** on
page 4.

Together

Vol 35 No 2

February 2019

During the Interim

REV. RICHARD WRIGHT, CHAIR, PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Personnel Committee of First Baptist Church, I want to express our appreciation for your continued prayers and encouragement over the past few months. It has been a challenging time in the history of our church, as we have had to say goodbye to both Pastors David and Brittany as they pursue new journeys in ministry. Now we stand on the edge of the unknown. Yet, we remain faithful to God's calling of who we are as a church and who we want to be in our city. We have found comfort in the words of so many who wholeheartedly believe that First Baptist Memphis' future is bright and will continue to be a beacon of hope in the city.

Ann Lamott wrote, "I do not at all understand the mystery of grace, only that it meets us where we are, but does not leave us where it found us." None of us have the privilege of understanding why everything happens. Yet we can all look to one another for healing by looking to God's grace for the future. 2019 is sure to bring its fair share of challenges. But we have faith that we will know God's presence in our lives as he calls us all to depend on each other and build a stronger community of faith.

We would like to take a few moments to inform everyone of our path moving forward. Much of what you will read has been mentioned from the pulpit, but since then, several more positive and exciting developments have occurred. Our goal as a personnel committee is to keep you informed every step of the way.

Regarding the transition from where we are now to finding a senior pastor, we will go through several healthy steps. We are very excited that Dr. Randy Hyde is willing to preach each Sunday for us. Our aim in securing Randy was to have a consistent,

experienced, pastoral voice as we together discern our next steps. We have received just that! Randy's arrival creates space for seeking an interim, and frees our committee up to conduct meaningful searches on multiple fronts. In addition, we will hear sermons from Dr. Scott Morris, Rev. Dr. Carol Richardson, CBF missionaries, and more.

This leads me to the second step in this journey...the intentional interim. There is a difference between a traditional interim and an intentional interim. In short, an intentional interim minister is an experienced minister who has completed over 85 hours of specialized training to develop a high degree of skill in this unique role. Performing many of the responsibilities of the pastor, this interim will help the congregation establish a transition team, will train the team, and then facilitate their leading the congregation through important focal points.

In other words, this minister will spend time with us and help us navigate through these uncharted waters. We can openly discuss matters with one another and he/she

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During the Interim, Continued from page 1

is there to listen and provide advice. At the end we will have a document that we can give to prospective pastors explaining who we are and who we want to be.

Also, our new Interim Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator, Holly Hatton, will play an important role as the intentional interim steps into his/her role. Holly is a lifelong member of our church who understands First Baptist and will play a vital role in connecting the interim to the rest of the

congregation. In addition, she will continue to keep the children and youth ministries active and strong.

And by the time you are reading this, it's possible that you may have met Dr. David Dennis. David is a Professor of Music at Union University, and has agreed to be our Interim Music Minister throughout the spring. We look forward to the expertise that David will bring to our congregation as he prepares and conducts worship each Sunday.

Again, I appreciate your trust in

the Personnel Committee over the past few months as we have been commissioned to seek out interim ministers who will take on the important weekly responsibilities of the church.

We have a long way to go as our church forms the appropriate search teams for a permanent ministerial staff. We value your ideas and welcome your prayers!

—Richard Wright, Personnel Committee Chair

INTERIM

Introducing Dr. David Dennis

FBC'S MUSIC MINISTRY INTERIM



Dr. David Dennis is a Professor of Music at Union University, where he conducts

the women's choir, *Cantilena*, and teaches courses in music theory and applied piano.

An accomplished pianist, Dr. Dennis has performed solo piano recitals throughout the South and mid-Atlantic region.

He holds a Doctorate in piano performance and a Masters in Church Music. Principal piano teachers include Ron Boud and Maurice Hinson, with additional piano study under Thomas Schumacher and

Adele Marcus.

Dr. Dennis has a strong interest in church music and in choral music education. Much of his energy is devoted to vocal development and the art of the choral rehearsal.

He has served numerous churches as interim or part-time music director, most recently at Second Baptist in Memphis, Tennessee.

We look forward to Dr. Dennis' leadership for our choir and in worship.

Dr. Dennis will be with us beginning January 30.

CHILDREN

Children's Valentine Art Fundaiser

FEBRUARY 10, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Love-themed art, made by our Children's Missions groups, will be available for sale on Sunday, February 10.

Their artwork will be on display in the Welcome Center before and after worship.

Proceeds from the art sale will go to missions.



INTERIM

Note from Holly Hatton

INTERIM YOUTH AND CHILDREN MINISTRY COORDINATOR

Dear Church Family,

Throughout Advent, David and Brittany asked us to wonder, “Why Me?” As I considered this question and the role I was asked to take as Interim Children and Youth Coordinator, the answer was simple; because I love these people. God is calling me to serve this congregation through this season. As are many of you, I am grieving the loss of pastors and friends, and have spent

many nights worrying about our future, asking God, “How will we get through this?” Then the answer came: “Be present, be kind, be open, and love each other.” God has blessed us with each other; what a precious blessing!

Throughout times of play and fellowship with our kids, and throughout times of community and worship with you all, I hear, “This is your church, and this is where you

belong.” I look forward to being a hand to hold for our youth who will miss Brittany so, dreaming up adventures and activities that will strengthen their bond. Our sweet children are my joy, and I’m excited to engage in formative and spirited play with them.

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you in this special way. You are a blessing to me. —Holly

LETTER

Thank you from Brittany

HOLDING FBC IN THE LIGHT

I think it’s safe to say we all know I usually don’t struggle for words—between carefully-crafted prayers, impromptu mini-sermons in choir and youth, and my tendency to give my unsolicited opinion, I always seem to have something to say. But I think I am... almost... finally speechless. When I sat down to think about my parting words to you, I came up blank. All I have left is a bursting heart and deep sense of gratitude and awe that I’ve never experienced before.

I don’t know why you decided to take a chance on me over four years ago, and I can’t articulate why I decided to take a chance on you. These four years haven’t been at all what I expected. While I know we poured a lot of energy, patience, grace, and love into each other, I don’t think we can take any of the

credit for what has blossomed during our time together. You are pure gift—a treasure beyond anything I deserve.

Thank you so much for such a meaningful send-off on my last Sunday. You were so thoughtful, and I am still overwhelmed by your generosity and affirmation. I will treasure the videos, pictures, and generous gifts, but most of all, it was a day full of memories and “wonderful words of life” that I will hold close for a lifetime. Thank you.

I’m not going to say goodbye. Instead, I choose, “holding you in the light.” Holding you in the light that drew us together; in the light of the same energy, patience, grace, and love that sustained us over these past few years; in the light that will continue to sustain us on the journey

ahead.

I leave you with a magnet (if you didn’t get one, there are more available in the church office) with these words. May it be a small reminder of my deep love for you.

I’m not sure there is much left to say, and so I leave you with all I have left, fully aware of how inadequate my words are, trusting you will hear past the words to the mysterious depths of my heart:

Thank you. I love you.

Holding you in the Light,

Brittany Stillwell

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INTERIM

Who to contact during the Interim

During this transitional time, we are so grateful to have members from our congregation and Deacon body to help with church needs.

Hospital List/Prayer Needs: contact the church office. Holly Hatton and Barbara Ricks will coordinate with Deacons to visit our church family at home or in the hospital.

Church Calendar: contact Bridget Ellis (bellis@fbcmemphis.org) for committee meeting requests and other events at the church.

Carol Richardson will coordinate with Dr. David Dennis to have our members serve as lay leaders in worship.

MEMORIALS

- In memory of **Rebecca Remaklus** by
Charles & Regina Remaklus
- In memory of **Carol Henderson** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
- In memory of **Roy Butler** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
- In memory of **Ernie Elder** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
- In memory of **Helen Joy Hansard** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
- In memory of **Carol Weiss** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
Ms. Nancy Burch
- In memory of **Celeste Reese** by
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield
- In memory of **Frances Walker** by
Ms. Nancy Burch