



# FIRST MEMPHIS

A Different Way to be Baptist

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www.fbcmemphis.org

## REMINDERS

**Sunday, February 2, 9 am**  
First Cup Gathering

**Sunday, February 2, 11 am**  
Youth Sunday Worship Service

**Sunday, February 23, noon**  
Congregational Conversation  
in Fellowship Hall

**Sunday, February 23, 1-2 pm**  
Kids' Missions

Learn about February's  
**Missions Moments** on page 2.

**Kids' Valentine Missions  
Fundraiser** will be Sunday,  
February 9, following worship.

# Together

Vol 36 No 2

February 2020



## Reflections on *Christian Century*

REV. DR. RANDY L. HYDE, INTERIM PASTOR

The publication *Christianity Today* has been in the news of late. But over the years, when it comes to periodicals, the one to which I have subscribed is the bi-weekly *Christian Century*. Perhaps that is because it stretches me so. Rarely do I read a copy that I do not find something with which I disagree. Yet, I come away from it thinking that maybe the writer is correct and I could very well be wrong. If nothing else, it teaches me to look

through the lenses of other perspectives.

Like that of John Buchanan, the former editor. A retired Presbyterian pastor, he says the thing he misses the most is baptizing babies. "Some of the babies," he writes, "are dressed in gowns that are family heirlooms; some wear corduroys and sweaters; one little boy wore a miniature white tuxedo complete with bow tie. Parents are worried that their infants will do something embarrassing, which they almost always do: they wiggle, scream for their parents, burp and throw up, smile beatifically at the minister, survey the congregation like royalty, and grab the minister's glasses or nose. In my tradition, the minister says the child's name followed by, 'You are a child of God, sealed by the Spirit in your baptism, and you belong to Jesus Christ forever,' to which one two-year-old recently responded, 'Uh-oh.'"

Jesus said that those who inherit the kingdom of heaven must be like a child. I wonder if that was his way of saying, "Uh-oh."

I also learned from an issue of *Christian Century* that "choral singing is the most popular and durable arts-related

participatory activity in the United States. This little nugget was discovered by the editors in *TLC.com*, which says that nationally 28.5 million people sing in one or more of about 250,000 chorus groups." Singing, we are told, especially in groups, simply makes people happy. It releases endorphins, "the feel-good chemical of the brain." In an Australian study in 2008, on average, choral singers expressed greater happiness than the general public, even when these singers were carrying greater burdens than the average person not singing in choirs. The benefits of choral singing in particular come from the fact that it is a social activity, which gives people a sense of belonging and combats loneliness.

There's always room for one more in the Sanctuary Choir. How about it?

M. Craig Barnes, president of Princeton Theological Seminary, is a former pastor. He admits he's always been uneasy about thinking of himself as the shepherd of a congregation. He thinks that role belongs to Jesus Christ. So where does he turn for an image of church leadership? To his sheepdog Esau, of course. In his former pastoral role,

Continued on page 4

## TRANSITION TEAM

### From the Transition Facilitator

FIFTH CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATION, FEBRUARY 23

Occasionally, I am asked by church members or by the transition team how I think the transition facilitation process is going. In case you are also wondering, I'd like to share my perspective. For reference, I am writing this article the day after the January congregational conversation.

To be completely forthright, I am encouraged. Here are some of the reasons why:

**Turnout for - and engagement in - congregational conversations remains strong.** The people who have been coming continue to be present and contribute.

**The dynamics are positive during the congregational conversations.** During the first three, the energy was great, people were leaning in to hear one another, and there were lots of smiles. And during the conversation on January 12, it was evident that participants were listening deeply, even when what was being said was difficult to absorb.

**Your transition team is phenomenal.** It is one of the hardest-working groups I've ever facilitated, and the team members love their church. But they are also representative of the range of perspectives in the church, and they are committed to working together despite their differences. They are a microcosm of what is and could

yet be, in the congregation as a whole.

**I note what is going on in the church beyond the transition facilitation process.** Attendance and giving are on the upswing. There's a lot of activity. (Y'all had a wonderfully busy Advent, for example.)

**The atmosphere feels different when I walk into the church.** During my first visit in June, many people told me, "You've got your work cut out for you," or "We're glad you're here - we need help!" Now I sense a congregation that is more settled (but not complacent) in spirit. I attribute that to great leadership by FBC staff and laity.

Now, I know that you are eager to see concrete steps or decisions come out of the transition facilitation process. (Do remember, though, that the transition team will not itself make these steps or decisions!) The going might seem slow in that regard. But you are doing the good, hard work that will make those more obvious fruits possible. There are no shortcuts to long-term, deeply-rooted change.

Thank you for your continued participation and trust. It is an honor to work with you, and I look forward to being with you again on February 23.

Laura

## MISSIONS

### 52 Weeks & 52 Ways to Change Memphis

2020 MISSIONS INITIATIVE

Thanks to our FBC family for their participation in our *52 Weeks and 52 Ways to Change Memphis* in January. Weekly "missions moments" will be highlighted in Together, with weekly focus points posted on our Facebook page. These "moments" fall into four categories: prayer, giving, doing, and connecting. Our Missions Focuses for February are:

**Feb. 2-8—Praying:** Pray for those closest to you by name. Spend time talking to God about your family or closest friends. Thank God for the love that you have for each other.

**Feb. 9-15—Connecting:** Call someone just to tell them that you love them (texting doesn't count, punch the numbers and have a conversation!)

**Feb. 16-22—Giving:** Choose some of your favorite non-perishable items to donate to the Little Pantry at Caritas. We will collect these items at the Welcome Center or in the church office.

**Feb. 23-29—Doing:** Invite someone to lunch or dinner with whom you haven't eaten before. Look to build a new friendship and expand your circle!

## MISSIONS

### Kids' Missions

FEBRUARY 23, 1-2 PM

We will meet for Kids' Missions February 23. from 1-2 pm.



This winter our kids are learning about food scarcity and hunger in the United States.

Please bring items (granola bars, peanut butter, mac-n-cheese boxes, crackers, etc.) for Caritas' Little Free Pantry.

The kids will learn how to make simple healthy snacks, learn about CBF Field Personnel working for Together For Hope, and will explore how hunger affects kids their age.

## MISSIONS

### Kids' Missions Fundraiser

FEBRUARY 9

On Sunday, January 9, our children will be selling handmade Valentine's cards for their annual Valentine Missions Fundraiser. These cards will be available following morning worship.

The proceeds from this fundraiser will go a Missions Partner of the kids choosing.

## MEMORIALS

In memory of **Vinson Cobb** by

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield

Robert & Sarah Lim

Mr. & Mrs. Kelton Morris

Ms. Nancy Burch

Mr. & Mrs. Jim Donnell

Dr. & Mrs. David Cunningham

Ms. Margaret Jordan

Ms. Marge Palazzolo

Ms. Glenda Tarver

Ms. Lois Sandusky

Baptist Women

Coed SS Class

Christie & Jonathan Atkins

Ms. Gayla Foscue

In memory of **Dwight & Myrtle Spearman** by

Ms. Anita Cobb

In memory of **Joyce Varner** by

Ms. Gayla Foscue

In memory of **Genevieve Adams** by  
Ms. Lois Sandusky

In memory of **Verna Bohannon** by  
Ms. Willena Highsmith

In memory of **Jean Rose Raney** by  
Ms. Nancy Burch

In memory of **Melinda Grable** by  
Mr. & Mrs. Mike Hartsfield  
Mr. David Edwards & Mr. Stephen Hernandez

In memory of **Robert & Myra Dickey** by  
Ms. Cathy Dickey

In memory of **Amy Creel Ibson** by  
Ms. Nancy Burch

## HONORARIA

In honor of **Mary Ann Rogers** by  
Ms. Sandra Chandler

## YOUTH

### Youth Sunday

FEBRUARY 2, 11 AM

On February 2, our Youth will lead us in worship.

The theme of this year's service is Connected.

We hope you will join us for this meaningful service.

## YOUTH

### Youth Super Bowl Party

FEBRUARY 2, 5 PM

The Youth will gather at the home of the Pfrommers on Sunday, February 2, at 5 pm, to watch the big game. Please bring a game day snack.

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Published Monthly by  
First Baptist Church  
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## a different way to be Baptist

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Barnes thought of himself as the sheepdog that nudges the sheep toward the true Savior of the flock.

When he takes Esau to the dog park, Esau is the only one not having fun. Instead, he keeps trying to round up the other dogs because that is his nature. "It's just in him to worry about the order of the community, which is also part of the pastor's calling. Ministry often isn't fun, and when we pastors do find joy, it's not because we spent all day chasing Frisbees. Our delight has to come from helping others gather around the Good Shepherd."

It saves him, he says, from the illusion that the pastor is necessary. He does think he is cherished, and called by the Shepherd to serve the flock. But he can save no one. It takes him off the hook and helps him handle the inevitable failures in ministry, while still enjoying a long tenure of service to his congregation.

These are just some of the things I have read about in *Christian Century*. Now do you understand why I enjoy it so much?

### SENIOR ADULTS

#### Valentine's Lunch

FEBRUARY 12, 11 AM

Join the Senior Adults for a Valentine's Lunch at Palladio Antiques (2169 Central Ave.) on Wednesday, February 12, at 11 am.

Please make your reservations early by calling Carol Richardson, 496-0581, or Carolyn Bynum, 755-5972, and let them know if you need a ride.

Don't forget to wear red!