



**FIRST  
MEMPHIS**

A Different Way to be Baptist

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[www.fbcmemphis.org](http://www.fbcmemphis.org)

## REMINDERS

**Las Posadas** on December 12:  
Learn more on page 2.

**Christmas Eve Worship**, Dec.  
24 at 6:15 pm

**70th Anniversary Organ  
Recital**  
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**Church Office Holiday  
Schedule**  
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Update**  
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**Church Conference**  
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church conference in January.  
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# Together

Vol 37 No 12

December 2021



## Seventy Years at Poplar and Parkway

REV. DR. KATHRYN KIMMEL, SENIOR PASTOR

First Memphis,

The day I came to preach in view of a call, I met Skip Howard who eagerly offered to take me on a tour of First Memphis history when I was ready. Several weeks later, we were digging through old newspaper clippings, sermons, and pictures. We were looking at old radios and microphones and cameras. And Skip was talking

a mile a minute, telling story after story of this church home. When I asked him what he loves about First, he told me... I love the bricks and mortar that make up this building. I love the architecture. I love its beauty. I love being inside this building... it's home for me.

For weeks now, Skip Howard and JP Tyner have been displaying this church's long history. We have seen pictures, sermons, letters, and articles from our locations at Second and Adams and Linden and Lauderdale, both rich with their own histories. We've celebrated a long line of pastors and our 97 years on the radio.

The end of November began our walk through our life at Poplar and Parkway. Our move to this campus was spurred with the first land purchased in 1939, the year we celebrated our Centennial. This month we have much to look forward to with our official Poplar and Parkway anniversary celebration on December 5 and our organ anniversary celebration the very next week.

Seventy years this building has housed First Baptist Church as we welcomed new life, shared good news, and came together to

worship and to fellowship. Seventy years God has been praised and petitioned in this building. Seventy years we have listened for the voice of God and sought to be faithful to God's call. Seventy years, we have gathered here as First Baptist Church. Thanks be to God for such grace.

I hope you will take the time to read some of our stories from over the years. You'll find several in this newsletter, and I hope you'll continue to take a walk through our history each Sunday morning as displays change and memories are lifted up.

Of course, we don't just celebrate what has been, but we give thanks for what is and look forward to what will be. In January, you will have an opportunity to interact with the displays by finishing the sentence: "*My New Year's Prayer for FBC is...*" and by praying intentionally for this church. It is my hope that you will be thinking about this and prayerfully considering your part as we move throughout this month together.

Kat



## ADVENT

### Nativity Lights

Look for our display of Nativity Lights on the front lawn during Advent and Christmastide.



## CHRISTMAS EVE

### Christmas Eve Service

DECEMBER 24, 6:15 PM

We will gather at 6:15 pm on Christmas Eve in the Sanctuary to participate in a service of Lessons, Carols, and Communion as we celebrate the birth of Christ. Invite your family and friends to this joyous service!

## CHRISTMASTIDE

### NO SS Classes

DECEMBER 26

We will have worship Sunday, December 26 at 11 am. Sunday School classes will not meet on this Sunday.

## ADVENTURE

### La Fiesta de las Posadas

DECEMBER 12, 5-7 PM

Our children and families are invited to take part in the procession of Las Posadas. Las Posadas is Spanish for “lodgings”. In Latin and Central America, it is a festival celebrated during the season of Advent.

A group representing the Holy Family stands outside a series of houses, singing songs, asking for lodging. They are refused time and again until the group reaches the designated house. Finally, the travelers are permitted to enter. Prayer and song continue in the home, and festive foods are shared. The evening ends with a piñata in the shape of star.

This year we'll celebrate Las Posadas together at First Baptist; taking a pilgrimage around the neighborhood, knocking on doors, and ending with a piñata celebration in the FLC. I look forward to celebrating the Nativity with you all in this special way!

—Holly



## 70TH ANNIVERSARY

# 70th Anniversary Organ Recital

DECEMBER 12, 3 PM

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

R. PAUL CAUDILL, Ph.D., D.D., Pastor

POPLAR & PARKWAY

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

DECEMBER 9, 1951

### THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

*Cordially Invites*

*You and Your Friends to Attend*

*the*

DEDICATORY SERVICE

*of the*

*New Organ*

*This Afternoon at Three O'Clock*

On December 9, 1951, the new 4-manual, 44-rank, 2885-pipe Wicks organ at First Baptist Church was dedicated in a concert recital by the late Adolph Steuterman, organist and choirmaster at Calvary Episcopal Church from 1919-1975; professor at Rhodes College (then Southwestern At Memphis); and

dean of Memphis organists. The organ was given by Dr. and Mrs. R.L. Sanders for the new church.

We are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Wicks organ and its musical influence on this church and generations of its members and music lovers throughout the Mid-South during the past seven decades with a 70th

Anniversary Dedicatory Recital on Sunday, December 12, 2021 at 3 pm in the Sanctuary. We will honor those individuals who have sat in residence at this organ during the past 70 years, and there will be a few surprises on this occasion, including a historic look at the role that the church organ has played in our history since the 19th century.

Our guest recitalists will include:

- David A. Caudill, Senior Carillonneur at Idlewild Presbyterian Church and organist and Director of Music at First Presbyterian Church. David is the grandson of Dr. R. Paul Caudill, pastor from 1944-1975, and pastor emeritus until his death in 2002.
- Aaron Foster, our church organist since 2017.
- John Michael Pfrommer, organ student and member of our church.

Be sure and mark your calendar to attend this memorable musical event and help us celebrate the importance of this instrument which has helped this congregation glorify God through our music all these years. Soli Deo Gloria.

## GIVING

### Year-End Giving

DEADLINE FOR GIFTS IS DECEMBER 31

Thank you for your faithful financial support for First Baptist Church in 2021. Financial gifts will be received through Friday, December 31 if you'd like them credited towards your 2021 charitable donations for federal tax purposes. Gifts postmarked after 12/31/21 will be credited toward your 2022 donations. If mailing your gift, use the following address: First Baptist Church, Attn: Lisa Butts, 200 E Parkway, N., Memphis TN, 38112.

Thank you again for remembering your church once again during this season of giving. Merry Christmas!

## CHURCH

### Church Office Holiday Schedule

CHURCH OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 24, 27

The church office will be closed for Christmas Friday, December 24 and Monday, December 27.

The office will be open regular hours on Tuesday, December 28-Friday, December 31 and closed Monday, January 3 in observance of New Year's Day.



## 70TH ANNIVERSARY

## 70th Anniversary Building Celebration

## STORIES FROM MEMBERS

It's true! I'm older than the bricks and mortar of First Baptist Church at Poplar and Parkway! Though I have some memory of being in the church at Linden and Lauderdale, it is the memories of our beautiful steepled church on the corner of one of the busiest intersections of the city that formed me through much of my childhood, teen years, as a young adult and now into my older years. I ran its halls, rung its bell on Sunday morning, crawled under all the pews multiple times, walked down its aisle as a G.A. and as a bride, was called down from the balcony with my entire youth group one Sunday morning to sit in front of the preacher when we became too rowdy, slept over in the Family Life Center as an youth and as an adult, watched over my own youth group, doing the crazy things youth always do.

My family—grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, parents, and a little brother—all moved to our new church when the doors were opened. I was one of the first children baptized in our baptistry by Dr. Paul Caudill. I still have memories of the scent of his handkerchief he held to my nose. All three of our children were formed in their faith by Sunday school teachers, mission leaders and youth ministers and were all baptized in the same baptistry as their mother. Two of the three were also married here. And as the generations pass, I have had the privilege as a minister of this church to baptize two of the eight grandchildren in its waters as well as a beloved daughter-in-law.

This church has been a bulwark of faith for our family through the years as can be said also by so many generations of families.

We can all say with grateful hearts together, "THANKS BE TO GOD!"

*Submitted by Carol McCall Richardson*

I wanted to be a part of FBC Memphis when I was a little girl seeing the church being built as we occasionally rode the bus to the zoo. I told my Mother who replied since we did not have a car, we needed to go to a church to which we could walk. Years later after I was married and had three children my childhood dream came true.

When my husband became protestant chaplain at St. Francis Hospital in Memphis we visited and joined FBC the first Sunday after his pastorate ended. I felt such joy and freedom. We went to choir rehearsal that evening and knew we were where God wanted us to be. It was such a thrill to sing

in the choir and I was even more thrilled when a few weeks later I was offered the position of Music Secretary. Years ago, I had heard God say, "Serve Me through music," and had shared it with my husband and soon after began taking voice lessons and serving our church as pianist/organist never knowing there would be a possibility to be a Music Secretary. When I was offered the position, I felt it was what God wanted me to do. At that time FBC's morning service was televised and choir members were required to lead in worship without being distracting (no nose scratching, no talking to others, etc.) The choir occasionally did musicals or classical works like Messiah or Elijah. In one of the musicals our youngest daughter was selected to be the child Jesus picked up lovingly as the choir sang "Jesus, Jesus ...". That was a special time for her and us.

I would have kept the Music Secretary position as long as possible. However, after five years God called my husband to a chaplaincy in Indiana and when the hospital was sold, to another Indiana hospital and after retirement from that to a pastorate in the same city. We watch your Sunday services as much as possible and are thankful for your streaming ministry and being able to reconnect with you after so many years. FBC Memphis has always been my favorite church. We are thankful for your continued ministry and feel especially blessed by Pastor Kat's sermons. We pray for your continued ministry. Happy seventieth anniversary!

*Submitted by Lydia Burton*

There was a time when I was young that being Baptist or attending First Baptist wasn't a choice I made but rather a choice made by my parents. As I grew in my own faith practice under the guidance, leadership, and prayers of First Baptist Church folks, I became a contributing community member, gladly of my own choosing. My heroes and heroines were at First Baptist, still are. I've seen how others use their faith muscles to navigate in the world when it becomes dark and difficult due to disease, loss, death, natural disasters, and all the other troubles you can name. These faithful folks have taught me so much in the way of putting Scripture into action. Learning to trust God and walk by faith and not by sight when your world seems to be crumbling around you. I could tell many stories of how these faithful folks impacted my life, especially my faith walk. The one I choose to share for the

70th anniversary of our location at Poplar and Parkway is the most profound for me.

It is important to tell that I am an only child, never married, and have had no children. These facts meant at some point I would be without any immediate family if all other blood relatives died before my own death. That day came early on Sunday morning December 30, 2007. My father died about 3 am that morning in a room at Baptist Hospital. I was with him. Shortly after hospital personnel had done their duties and I had gathered all the personal effects in the room to take home, I left the hospital fully aware that I was alone... an orphan, so to speak. The weight of that realization was so heavy.

After unpacking all the items from the hospital, I sat in the stillness of home...full of grief and acutely aware of how life had changed for me. I cannot say now exactly what "came over me" but I shall say it was the habit of going to First Baptist that my parents established for me many years before. That habit "kicked in" and I got up and got ready for church.

I can't say exactly how many times I told people of my father's death that morning as I walked the hallways to my Sunday School room. Everyone I passed knew of his critical condition and asked me about him as I approached. Each and every one of them deeply cared for my father and for me. The news traveled fast through the halls and classrooms. Love surrounded me. Love was expressed in words, in hugs, in so many ways. There was pure and honest intercessory prayer and sincere action for me. It was a strength inside that I had never known to such an extent. I felt the realization of eternal life in a way that cannot be explained nor can I do it justice to describe it. It was amazing. Amazing grace. As I stood in my regular place in the choir loft during worship that morning, I knew my Savior lives eternally. I knew my father lives eternally. I knew I would live eternally.

The church is so much more than bricks and mortar; it is what becomes real to the people who choose to gather within that brick and mortar. The building is the very evidence that faith is worth it, that love is real, and that life is eternal for those who believe and love as Jesus taught us. In this world full of darkness and pain, people need "church" and what this building has meant to so many for 70 years. I know I do!

*Submitted by Cathy Wilhelm*

## MISSIONS

### The Linda Marks Memorial Missions Offering

**2021-2022 Goal: \$25,000**

Arkwings	10%
CBF Global Missions	10%
Church Health Center	10%
Lifeline to Success	20%
MIFA	10%
Rachel's Kids	20%
Together for Hope	20%

*\*Based on the example provided by CBF, we will continue to include volunteer hours in our mission offering. Partnership with other local ministries includes our personal participation in their ministry. Your designated gifts will continue to be sent to the recipient of your choice.*

The candles in the baptistry of our sanctuary help us keep track of our missions goal. Every lit candle represents approximately \$3,571 toward our missions offering goal of \$25,000. We have currently received \$32,780.00 toward our goal.

## MEMORIALS

In memory of **Jim Donnell** by

David & Sara Cunningham

## HONORARIA

In honor of **Kat Kimmel** by

Marcus & Rebecca Wiggs

## MISSIONS

### Linda Marks Memorial Missions Offering & Matching Campaign

The Marks family is offering a 'challenge donation' to increase First Baptist Memphis Missions Goal in memory of Linda Marks to honor her commitment to missions and our gratitude for First Baptist as a faith community.

Once donations reach \$25,000, the Marks family will match any additional donations up to \$3,000. We hope total donations (including theirs) will become \$31,000! Please give generously so that we can take full advantage of this opportunity to expand our mission presence in the wider community.

## GIVING

### Giving Options

#### ONLINE GIVING OPTIONS AVAILABLE

We are grateful for your continued financial support of FBC during this ongoing pandemic. We have a variety of ways to give your gifts to FBC besides the offering plate.

**Mail:** You may mail your check to the church, FBC, Attn: Financial Administrator, 200 E Parkway N., Memphis, TN 38112.

**Online via our website:** via credit card at [www.fbcmemphis.org/giving](http://www.fbcmemphis.org/giving).

**Online via your bank's bill pay or ACH Payments:** If you already pay your household bills through online banking, you can simply add First Baptist Church as a new additional payee using the church address and phone number and include your envelope number. Email Lisa Butts to get your envelope number. You can put in an amount to send automatically

each time period or you can simply go in each week/month/etc., and have the amount sent to us just as you would other bills.

For those who would prefer to have an automatic payment set-up from your bank account or credit card, you can request ACH Form from the finance office, complete it, sign, and return to the finance office. The form will lead you through completion. You have the option of specifying what account you want to the amount to be deducted from, the amount, frequency, and whether or not you want an ending date.

If anyone has questions concerning these giving methods, please email Lisa Butts ([lbutts@fbcmemphis.org](mailto:lbutts@fbcmemphis.org)). God Bless and stay healthy!

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## a different way to be Baptist

### FBC SWAG

#### FBC Has a Cafe Press Shop

Christmas is just around the corner! Check out FBC's Cafe Press shop (<https://www.cafepress.com/firstmemphis>) for some great holiday gift ideas!

We will continue to add new products, so if there are particular items you'd like to see, please let the PR Committee know.

This is a great way to promote our church in our community, and the church will receive a portion of the proceeds for every sale.

### FBC

#### Annual Church Conference

JAN. 30, FH, FOLLOWING WORSHIP

Please mark your calendar for our **Annual Church Conference** on **Sunday, January 30** following morning worship in the Fellowship Hall.

We will gather for lunch and the annual business meeting. At the meeting, the church will approve the 2022 Church Budget and approve new committee members.