

COLUMBIA  
FBCMO

CONGREGATIONAL PROFILE



First Baptist Church  
columbia, mo



Because we have responded to Christ's call to follow him as disciples and because we find this calling too difficult and too important to fulfill alone,

We covenant together

to support and to pray for one another without ceasing;  
to be candid in our speech, kind in our attitudes, and caring in all our dealings with one another;  
to seek the mind and vision of Christ for ourselves and our life together,  
mindful that our **unity does not require uniformity.**

Moreover, we covenant

to give first priority to our times of public worship and learning;  
to sustain our common mission by proportionate giving, faithful service and personal witness;  
to live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel we profess and of this family of faith; and  
to seek each other's forgiveness and God's when we fail to honor this covenant,

Trusting God's Spirit to renew us in

stronger **faith**,  
brighter **hope**,  
and broader **love.**



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*We seek a person excited to be here, to unite and to engage the congregation. Someone to lead but work with staff and congregation, be empathetic, be hopeful and optimistic. Someone who is committed to fellowship, is forward thinking, is courageous, and open and responsive. A pastor who loves people, relates faith to the real world, knows history, and encourages our young people.*

*– from our Visioning and Self Study Survey*

## **WELCOME TO FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**

We are a church built on its progressive foundations and carry that forward into the 21st century in the heart of Missouri. Located in The District—the vibrant downtown of Columbia (affectionately called CoMo)—the church is positioned in the academic center of Missouri, surrounded by the University of Missouri, Columbia College, and Stephens College.

We are a diverse congregation that celebrates that our unity does not require uniformity. We are a progressive church with a long history of women in ministry, tradition of being welcoming and affirming of the LGBTQIA+ community, a focus on social justice, and commitment to ecumenism. We believe that all people are created in the image of God; thus, all are welcomed to participate fully in the life of our church and can serve in leadership. We believe in religious liberty, soul competency, priesthood of the believers, and local church autonomy. The church maintains alignment with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and American Baptist Churches.

Our worship services are characterized by inspirational preaching, theme-related music, integrated art and worship elements, and lay participation. We explore our faith by blending biblical teachings with intellectual integrity, respecting a person's right to think freely. We are committed to two worship services—contemporary and liturgical—that honor God and allow for various worship styles.

Our congregation sees itself as a strong voice for progressive Christianity, seeking to mirror Christ's ministry of acceptance, and striving to be a place of healing and reconciliation. The Rev. Dr. Carol McEntyre served as senior pastor from May 20, 2012, to November 30, 2023, providing inspired and gifted leadership. She leaves our church in a strong and healthy position and prepared for continued growth. We look forward to our next senior pastor joining with us in ministry for the next chapter in our 200 years of witness and building the Kin-dom.



The Senior Pastor Search Committee seeks God's wisdom and the power of the Holy Spirit to guide the next pastor to us. If you feel moved and called to minister with us, please submit a resume to [pastorsearch@fbc-columbia.org](mailto:pastorsearch@fbc-columbia.org).

Blessings!

Noah Hartsfield, Co-Chair  
Kimberly Moeller, Co-Chair

## What We Believe

We talk about the triune God. God is one being in three persons – known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit or Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit.

We talk about how God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ and saves us in the full sense of that word by his life, death and resurrection.

We talk about the Holy Spirit as God’s nearness to us and as the means by which we commune with Christ today.

We stress the importance of the church as a Spirit-formed community, and the continuation of the body of Christ on Earth, working to further the kingdom of God.

We emphasize the life and teachings of Jesus as central to our faith.

We affirm that the Bible is a primary source for our beliefs and practice; one which is to be engaged with our minds and hearts.

We are a church that:

- blends biblical faith with intellectual integrity, respecting a person’s right to think freely
- values everyone’s gifts for service and leadership, both women and men
- welcomes people of every age, race, gender, economic reality and LGBTQIA+ status. We believe that all people are created in the image of God; thus, all are welcomed to participate fully in the life of our church and can serve in leadership
- affirms spiritual experiences of new members from both Baptist and non-Baptist backgrounds
- values different expression of worshiping God, both contemporary and liturgical
- receives joy from intergenerational experiences and ministries
- celebrates and promotes Christ’s call for social justice
- seeks to make a difference in our community and world
- is a family where joys, sorrows, hopes and dreams all meet at the table of our Lord
- understands that unity does not require uniformity

First Baptist Columbia is a place where everyone matters. Our commitment to one another and to Christ is reflected by the values of our Church Covenant. In community together, we strive to live our lives in a manner worthy of the gospel we profess.



## Membership and Attendance

First Baptist Columbia today is a community of approximately 500 members. The membership includes a diverse age range, predominantly identifies as white, and has a mix of partner orientation and gender identity. Sunday worship attendance is about 150 persons between our two services.

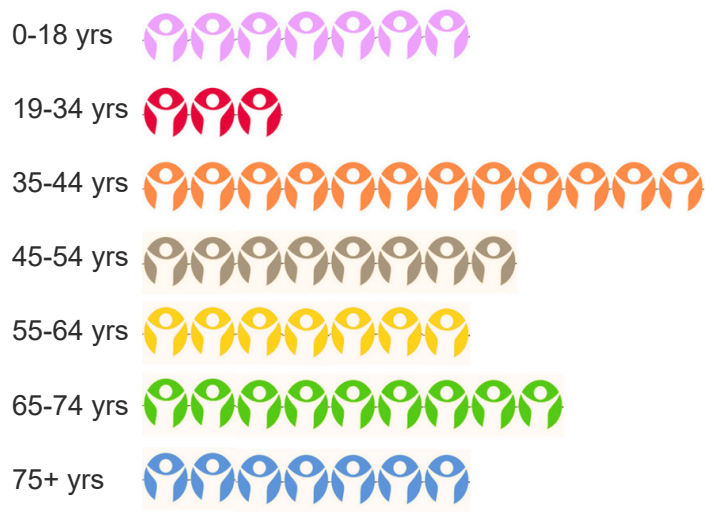
Faith origins among our church members vary widely. While a plurality began their faith journey within the Baptist denomination, over half of our members have backgrounds rooted in other denominations (Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian), non-denominational, and non-Christian backgrounds.

## Finances

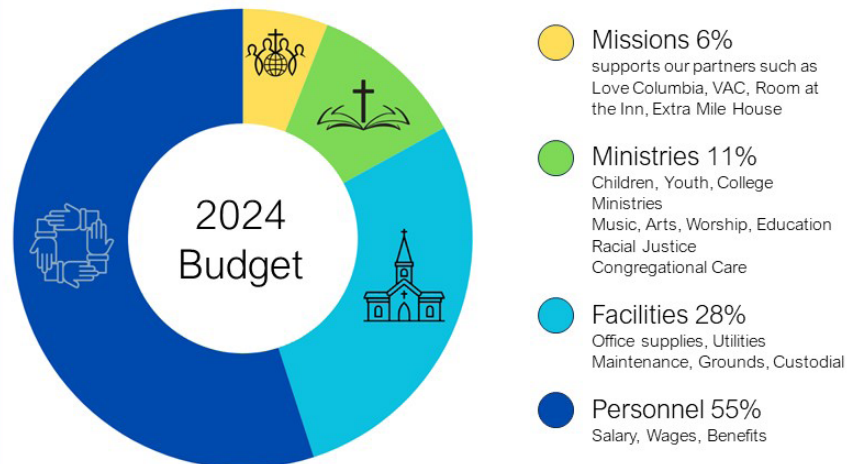
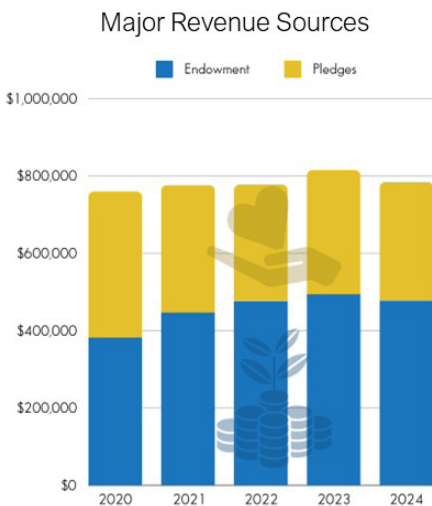
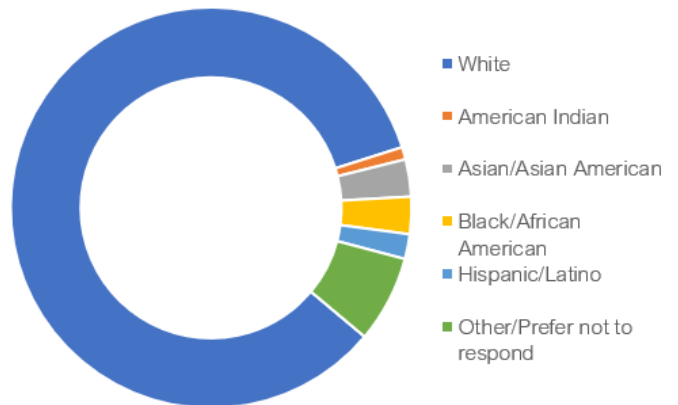
We are blessed with a faithful congregation that provides significant financial support to the budget of the church and for special offerings to fund specific needs. For 2024, our budget is \$880,000, which is supported by pledges, unpledged and loose offering, endowment income and parking revenue.

The generosity of past members has resulted in the establishment of professionally managed endowment, allowing their legacy to live on and to help First Baptist Church fulfill its mission to serve its members and our wider community.

## Membership by Age



## Racial/Ethnic Composition

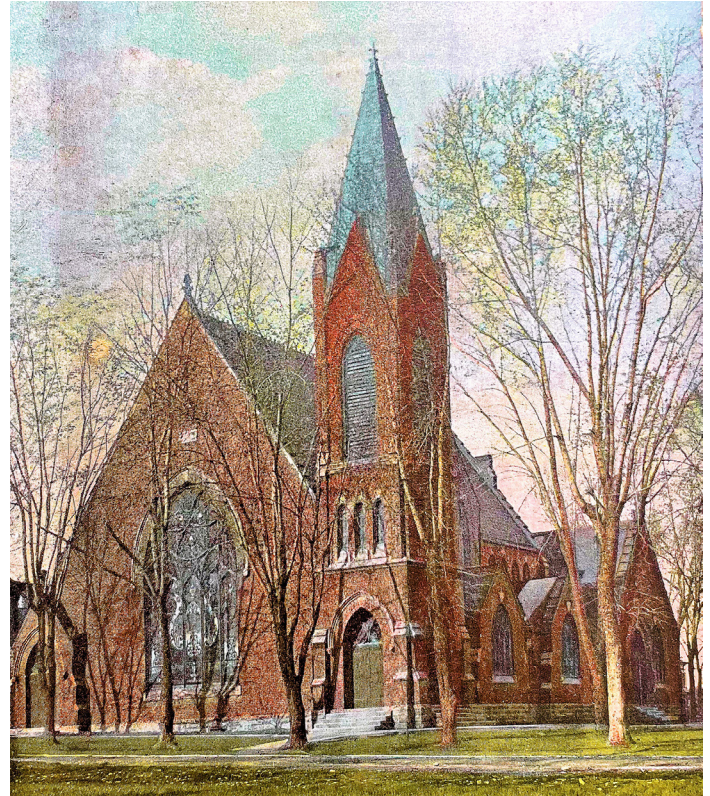


## Columbia's Oldest Church – a 200-Year History

For two centuries, First Baptist Columbia has been a beacon of faith, hope and love. Established by 11 individuals in 1823, only two years after the city of Columbia was founded, our church has enjoyed a history filled with members who have led the way in progressive thought and action. Early leaders left indelible marks not only on the church, but also on our city, state and nation, championing ideals such as higher education and advancements in health care.

From its founding, First Baptist Columbia shared informal ties with other local Baptist churches and sent representatives to annual meetings. It joined the newly formed Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 1845, was actively involved with groups of Northern Baptists, and became dually aligned with SBC and the Northern Baptist Convention (later American Baptist Churches) in 1920. In 2000, First Baptist Columbia joined many churches across the country in severing ties with the SBC after the latter adopted an amendment de-emphasizing the role of Jesus Christ and the role of personal experience in interpreting Scripture, and declared that women in SBC churches would not be allowed to serve as pastors. For the same reasons, the church mutually broke with the Missouri Baptist Convention soon thereafter.

While completing its first decade, church leaders assisted in founding what is now Stephens College – the second oldest women's college in the country and the city's first institution of higher education. A few short years later in 1839, state legislators voted to locate the University of Missouri to Columbia, a decision largely due to fundraising, donations and campaigning by members of First Baptist Columbia. Throughout the generations, many local higher education leaders and faculty have served as active



*The original church that sat on our current location of Broadway and Waugh Streets, dedicated in 1891.*

members and leaders among the congregation. This continued emphasis on education led to the establishment of the Child Development Center, which was located at the church from 1969-2020. The goal was to provide high-quality preschool education regardless of religious belief, ethnic background or socioeconomic status. While the center permanently closed following the COVID-19 pandemic, the church's support for education at all levels in our community remains.



*Sunday school picture, 1913*

## Our History (continued)

Our commitment to the wider community began early, with the church separating from a Baptist association that had voiced its opposition to missions. This goal remains evident today through local partnerships with groups like Love Columbia and the Extra Mile House, support of missions in other countries, and a commitment to encouraging our pastors as they engage in denominational efforts.

The recent bicentennial of First Baptist Columbia provided the opportunity to learn – and also to acknowledge – more of our history. Our archives clearly show that several of our founders and many members were enslavers; sharing our history includes acknowledging these past sins and distorted view of the gospel. As a congregation, we have committed to understanding and lamenting the past while striving to change the future. To turn this principle into action, the membership recently made the Racial Justice and Inclusion Team a permanent part of the church structure. The team organizes events to bring nationally recognized speakers to Columbia. They traveled on a civil rights pilgrimage with Second Baptist Church, our predominantly African-American sister church.

As First Baptist Columbia enters its third century, the church continues to express its voice as a progressive, engaged, and inclusive congregation. Members value education and study that are spiritually maturing, challenge our perceptions, and deepen our faith. First Baptist Columbia is committed to continued support of music enrichment, deepening communal engagement through local ministries, and openly sharing our values.



***First Baptist Columbia holds a proud history of women in leadership. The first record of women taking charge of church affairs occurred in 1876, with the first woman elected to the Board of Trustees in 1912. In 1977, the church began to ordain women for ministry, and it has benefited from the ministry of three female pastors since. Additionally, while First Baptist Columbia officially went through the process of becoming an affirming church in 2014, it has long been a place where members of the LGBTQIA+ community have been welcome both as members and as a part of church leadership.***



**Group picture taken at the 200th Anniversary Worship Service, November 12, 2023**



## Columbia, Missouri (CoMo): Where Community and Opportunity Converge

Welcome to Columbia, a vibrant, progressive city centrally located in Missouri and the nation. With a population of 126,172, Columbia offers a unique blend of college-town charm and big-city amenities. Situated equidistant from St. Louis and Kansas City, residents can make easy day trips to these bustling cities. The state capital, Jefferson City, is 30 miles to the south, and air travel access is available to national and international destinations via Columbia Regional Airport's daily flights to Chicago and Dallas. All this makes Columbia one of the fastest growing cities in Missouri. The American Institute for Economic Research has ranked the city as one of the top 10 college towns.

### **Affordable Living and Economic Stability:**

Columbia's below-national-average cost of living and affordable housing options make it an ideal destination for individuals and families. With a median home value of \$236,432 and a median household income of \$57,463, residents can enjoy a comfortable lifestyle without breaking the bank. The city's stable economy, driven by industries such as education, health care, insurance and technology, ensures long-term prosperity for its residents.

**Arts, Culture and Food Scene:** Immerse yourself in Columbia's vibrant arts, culture and restaurant scene. With annual festivals like [True/False Film Festival](#), rich performances from the [University Concert Series](#), and venues like the Missouri Theatre and Blue Note, the city pulsates with artistic energy. Whether you're a patron of the arts, a budding creator or a lover of restaurants and farmers' markets, Columbia offers diverse opportunities for cultural enrichment, expression and good eating!

### **Educational Excellence and Lifelong Learning:**

Education lies at the core of Columbia's identity, with four institutions of higher learning — the [University of Missouri](#), [Stephens College](#), [Columbia College](#) and [Moberly Area Community College](#) — shaping the city's intellectual landscape. Families benefit from a robust public school system and a plethora of private educational options, ensuring access to quality education for all. Moreover, the city's vibrant university culture fosters a spirit of lifelong learning, with countless opportunities for personal and professional growth.



## Our Community (continued)

**Natural Beauty and Outdoor Adventure:** Escape into nature and discover Columbia’s and Boone County’s breathtaking outdoor spaces. With more than 3,000 acres of parkland and an extensive network of hiking trails and natural conservation areas, residents can explore the area’s scenic beauty year-round. From tranquil lakeside retreats to rugged hiking trails, Columbia and mid-Missouri offer excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation and exploration. Dog lovers will appreciate the city’s leash-free parks, while nature enthusiasts can marvel at the breathtaking flora and fauna of Missouri’s landscape.

**Diverse Job Market and Economic Opportunities:** Columbia’s diverse job market and thriving economy provide ample opportunities for career advancement and professional growth. From education and health care to technology and entrepreneurship, the city’s robust economy supports a wide range of industries. With its strategic location and supportive business environment, Columbia attracts top talent and fosters innovation and creativity.

**Exceptional Health Care and Well-being:** Columbians have access to world-class health-care facilities and medical professionals. Major hospital systems include the University of Missouri Hospitals and Clinics, Boone Hospital and Truman Veterans Hospital. Hundreds of medical and dental providers in additional specialized clinics assure residents of choice and quality care.

In Columbia, you’ll discover a welcoming community, abundant opportunities, and a high quality of life. Whether you’re drawn to its scenic landscapes, thriving cultural scene or dynamic job market, Columbia invites you to embark on a journey of discovery, growth and fulfillment. Welcome home to Columbia — where community and opportunity converge.



## Rev. Brittany McDonald Null – Pastor of Families and Spiritual Formation



Brittany came to First Baptist Columbia in 2017 as the church’s first pastoral resident. After two years, she was named Interim Assistant Pastor and then, in 2020, accepted the call as Pastor of Families and Spiritual Formation. Brittany serves as the pastor to children, families, college students and young adults. She also oversees adult education, spiritual formation and worship planning, and assists with pastoral care. Passionate about congregational ministry, Brittany loves being part of a congregation that promotes the message of belonging. After receiving a bachelor’s degree in social work from Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, she earned her Master of Divinity in pastoral ministry at the university’s affiliated Logsdon Seminary. Brittany met her husband, Bryce, during her first seminary class, and he has been her constant champion and support through school and ministry. They have a cat, Bellatrix, who loves him and tolerates her. In her free time, Brittany enjoys reading, a good conversation over a cup of coffee, and taking advantage of Columbia’s many trails.

## Rev. Caleb Cooke – Pastoral Resident



Caleb, a native of Mount Airy, North Carolina, began a pastoral residency at First Baptist Columbia in August 2023 and was ordained by the church in March 2024. Caleb’s call to ministry is rooted in the sure and present hope of Christ’s resurrection. He believes that hope is central to the Christian faith and is committed to fostering hope in the Church. Caleb attended Duke University as a Benjamin Newton Duke Scholar and majored in religious studies. Originally planning a career in academia, he decided to stay and pursue further coursework in biblical studies at Duke Divinity School. During his time there, Caleb presented research at regional, national and international conferences, including the Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting in Salzburg, Austria. Caleb graduated with a master’s degree in theological studies while serving as director of Christian education at First United Methodist Church of Henderson, North Carolina, where he first felt his call to ministry. Caleb and his wife, Rianna, have two dogs, Opie and Luca. In his free time, he likes to bake, play board games and read.

## Rev. Dr. Gregory L. Hunt – Interim Senior Pastor



Greg, currently serving as Interim Senior Pastor, is a highly regarded speaker, teacher, consultant and writer. In addition to 30-plus years of pastoral ministry, Greg was integrally involved in the birth and early development of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and served as a member of the Board of Directors of Central Baptist Theological Seminary for 14 years. Throughout ministry, he has been deeply committed to the translation of faith into civic, global and everyday life. As an equipper of Christians and congregations, he is dedicated to empowering and releasing people for the full incarnational potential of their everyday lives. In 2009, Greg transitioned into full-time work through a not-for-profit he and his wife, Priscilla, formed to serve people as they lead their organizations, relationships and lives. This work includes interim pastoral ministry, which he finds particularly stimulating because of the unique opportunity it presents for congregational development.

## Noah Hartsfield – Handbell Director



Noah has attended First Baptist Columbia since his undergraduate days at the University of Missouri in the mid-2000s. He began his tenure as director of the First Baptist Columbia handbell program in 2019 after having rung in the ensemble for more than a decade. Noah began ringing handbells in second grade while growing up in Kirksville, Missouri, and has played with multiple church choirs as well as with the Columbia Handbell Ensemble. Over his 13 years of ringing with the latter, he performed at multiple high-profile concert engagements, including for regional handbell festivals across the Midwest, Great Plains and New England, as well at national conferences for the Handbell Musicians of America. Noah works as a talent recruiter and holds a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from the University of Missouri with concentrations in psychology, sociology and music. He and wife Abby were married in the First Baptist Columbia sanctuary in 2010 and have three young children. He enjoys cooking and strategy board games, and also dabbles in composing.

### **Nellene Martin – Childcare Director**



Nellene, the church's child-care director, is a Nebraska native. After earning a teaching degree, she worked as a care manager for children with disabilities and then transitioned to working with the elderly and adults with disabilities. Nellene owned a home-care business for 10 years with emphasis in caring for adults and blind individuals. She is active with the National Federation of the Blind and advocates for the blind through social interactions, attending state and national conventions, and testifying for their rights.

### **Shelby Myers – Awakening Worship Praise Band Director**



Shelby, leader of the Awakening Praise Band for the past six years, has loved music since her childhood. After teaching herself to play guitar, she began leading worship at Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Greenville, Texas, at age 16. Shelby led worship in various forms throughout high school and college at Central Methodist University in Fayette, Missouri, where she earned a master's degree in clinical counseling. As a licensed professional counselor, Shelby works in a private practice she established in 2023. She has three amazing kids, Katie, Nate and Elizabeth. Most days, if Shelby is not in session or at the church, you can find her on a trail or hanging with her kids.

### **Colleen Ostercamp – Organist and Pianist**



Colleen, First Baptist Columbia's organist of 33 years, also plays the piano, flute and bells. Music always has been a part of her life – she even remembers winning the “Singing Brownie Award” as an 8-year-old. Colleen received a bachelor's degree in music education from Sioux Falls College in South Dakota. She went on to do mission work in Brazil and Canada and then became director of a Miami preschool. She loves her church home at First Baptist Columbia, especially the family atmosphere that the professional staff offers and the friendly congregation that she gets to play for every Sunday.

### **Dr. Jonathan Ray – Traditional Worship Music Director**



Jonathan, music director for traditional worship at First Baptist Columbia, joined the staff in 2023. Born in Missouri but raised in Arkansas, he, along with his wife, Christina, moved in 2017 to Kansas City, where he served as adjunct voice instructor at several colleges. For two years, he was the tenor Young Artist for the Lyric Opera of Kansas City. In 2019, Jonathan was appointed vocal music leader at Avondale United Methodist Church in Kansas City, where he served until 2023. He moved to mid-Missouri to serve as assistant professor of music at Central Methodist University and for the traditional worship musical directorship at First Baptist Columbia. Recently, Jonathan has appeared as a soloist with the Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre, Lawrence Opera Theatre, Heartland Opera Theatre, St. Petersburg Opera and the Missouri Symphony. He earned his doctorate degree in vocal performance and choral conducting at Louisiana State University, his master's degree in vocal performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and his bachelor's degree in music education at Arkansas Tech University.

### **Brenda Rice – Administrative Assistant for Web, Facilities, and Arts**



Brenda has been a part of First Baptist Columbia since 2005. Her role encompasses the Creative Arts, the Church's website, and the facilities. Brenda is passionate about creating artful displays that enrich and embody the spirit of worship in both our contemporary and traditional spaces. Her love for plants and interior design helps to create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere throughout the building. As a staff liaison for the host team, Brenda works closely with church groups and teams, and facilitating meetings and events. She also coordinates and hosts yearly church-wide events, oversees all outside groups that rent our facilities, and manages community services that the church hosts. In addition, she handles website maintenance, weekly updates, and oversees our YouTube channel.

In addition to the positions listed above, First Baptist Columbia employs both a custodian and an administrative assistant.

## Church Council

The council coordinates the church's programs and plans in such a way as to promote unity, completeness and purposefulness within the congregation. This group meets as needed, but no less than once a quarter. The council is led by a church moderator, elected by the congregation to serve a two-year term. Membership consists of coordinators from seven ministry teams, the church clerk, treasurer and three at-large members elected annually from the congregation. Church pastors serve as ex-officio members.

There are seven ministry teams, each with a coordinator that serves a two-year term. Coordinators are eligible for re-election if so selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the church.

- **Congregational Care (Loving) Team** extends love and care to the entire congregation through interaction and Christian fellowship. The Diaconate provides visits and special care for those unable to attend in-person worship and events.
- **Teaching Team** coordinates most forms of Christian education directed to the congregation and chosen audiences beyond the congregation.
- **Worship Team** provides direction for use of worship spaces, enhances the worship experience and encourages member participation and ways to share their gifts in worship.
- **Missions (Serving) Team** leads the congregation in mission education and ministry both locally and beyond. The team meets monthly to discuss and make recommendations on how to best allocate First Baptist Columbia's resources of time, talent and financial support to ministry partners at the local, national and global level.
- **Telling Team** uses print, radio, website and social media to equip and encourage the congregation to invite and welcome guests to worship and other informing events sponsored by the church.
- **Racial Justice and Inclusion Team** provides studies and opportunities for the congregation to recognize and better understand the ways white privilege has caused harm and to build relationships that cross the racial divide and achieve justice and inclusion of all marginalized people in our church and in the broader community.
- **Administrative Team** seeks to ensure adequate staffing, care and distribution of funds, plans for and maintains physical plant resources and keeps proper congregational records.

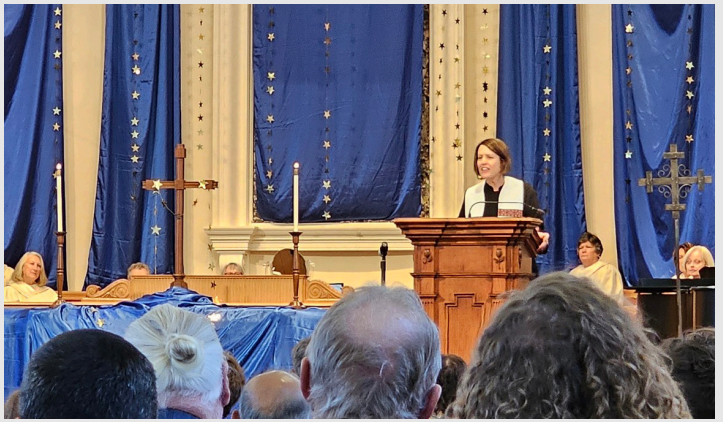


## Worship Services

Each Sunday, First Baptist Columbia offers well-planned, spiritually thoughtful worship experiences guided by scripture and including congregational participation and excellent music. Most Sundays, two opportunities are available, but on special Sundays, a single blended worship or a “brunch worship” are offered. Visual enhancements enrich the worship experience.

- Awakening worship meets at 9:15 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Music is led by a praise and worship band with lead, bass and acoustic guitars, drums, saxophone and piano. Vocalists lead music and encourage participation.
- Traditional worship meets at 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary. The Chancel Choir provides an anthem. Musical support also is offered by pipe organ, piano, handbells and occasionally other instruments.

Small Groups and Sunday School – These groups meet at 10:15 a.m. in the Education Building and provide Bible study, discussion and fellowship.



## Children, Youth, College

### Children

First Kids engages youngsters from kindergarten through fifth grade in worship and activities that help form their faith and develop a nurturing connection to the church family. Our children collect the offering, pray, share their stories, light Advent candles and even lead in worship. They enjoy a variety of activities in each season such as a family pancake party, Easter egg hunts, a Pentecost party, parents’ night out at a local family entertainment center, vacation Bible school for the entire family, and participation in churchwide family events, including a summer pool party, the Fall Kickoff and Fall Fun Fest. Enthusiastic volunteers from among the adult and youth membership help make First Kids a robust, growing ministry of First Baptist Columbia.



### Youth

For more than a century, First Baptist Columbia has been known for its strong tradition of student ministry, backed by a dedicated and active advisory group of parents and volunteers. Our youth are energetic, contributing church members, participating in fellowship, learning, worship and service projects. They grow in faith and knowledge through Sunday morning small-group study and Wednesday evening gatherings. In recent years, the highlight has been a summer trip to Unidiversity Camp in Maryville, Tennessee, where they examine inspiring spiritual themes while enjoying nature, float trips and other fun recreation in the Smoky Mountains. Students enthusiastically take on leadership roles in church and community service projects and in activities such as making treats for homebound members, leading worship, cooking pancakes for the First Kids’ Lenten kickoff, hiding

Easter eggs, helping conduct the summer family camp, and serving those in need at First Baptist Columbia's Extra Mile House and Columbia's City of Refuge. Fellowship outings find the youth representing the church in local parades, ice skating, bowling, attending concerts, enjoying Trunk or Treat, and the new sixth-graders spending a day at Worlds of Fun at the end of the summer. The ministry is poised for growth in the coming years as we nurture more young people in their faith and service to God and community.

## College and Young Adults

Being located in a city with two colleges and a state university, First Baptist Columbia welcomes new students each year from across Missouri, the nation and from other countries. Young adults are encouraged to be full participants in the life of the church. They have opportunities to fellowship and to get to know each other better through weekly gatherings, shared meals, and activities such as board game café night and book discussions. A number of college students and young adults also serve in leadership roles, including for the children's ministry and as scholarship musicians. To reach out to more young people, First Baptist Columbia recently joined seven other local churches to form TIDES, an ecumenical, LGBTQIA+ campus ministry that in the past year has offered "ashes to go" on the Mizzou campus, a weekly Lenten vespers service, an outdoor Easter service at sunset and a fall retreat.

## Music

First Baptist Columbia has an array of musical opportunities for the congregation stemming from our belief in the importance of music in the praise and worship of God.



- **Chancel Choir** ranges in age from college students to retirees and practices and sings during the traditional worship service.
- **Chancel Bells** welcomes anyone, experienced or novice, and plays in worship several times a month.
- The **Praise Band**, featuring vocals accompanied by electric/acoustic/bass guitars, keyboard, electric drums, plays a variety of contemporary worship style music for the 9:15 a.m. Awakening service.
- **First Friends** musicians, made up of K through 5th graders, have the opportunity to learn music at our summer family camp and sing at Sunday's worship service. They also learn and perform special music each year during our church Christmas dinner.
- **Scholarship musicians** serve as integral parts of our worship teams. These paid positions are held by college students, many of whom are seeking degrees in music. They contribute to First Baptist Columbia's musical offerings as section leaders in our Chancel Choir and provide musical leadership for our praise band.



### Pastoral Residency

Acknowledging the high rate of “burnout” in ministry and lack of opportunities for women and non-binary seminary graduates to gain experience as pastors, First Baptist Columbia provides a [pastoral residency ministry](#) of two to three years. Each resident fellow is immersed in a comprehensive curriculum built on preaching, worship, pastoral care, self-care, church leadership, management and administrative tasks, teams and councils, missions and benevolence, and affinity-focused ministries. Brittany McDonald Null, current Pastor of Families and Spiritual Formation, was our first pastoral resident. Following the pandemic, the congregation reaffirmed our mission to restart the residency ministry. Caleb Cooke, our current resident, started with the church in August 2023 and was ordained in March 2024. Funding from the Eula Mae and John Baugh Foundation matches First Baptist Columbia’s financial support for this ministry.

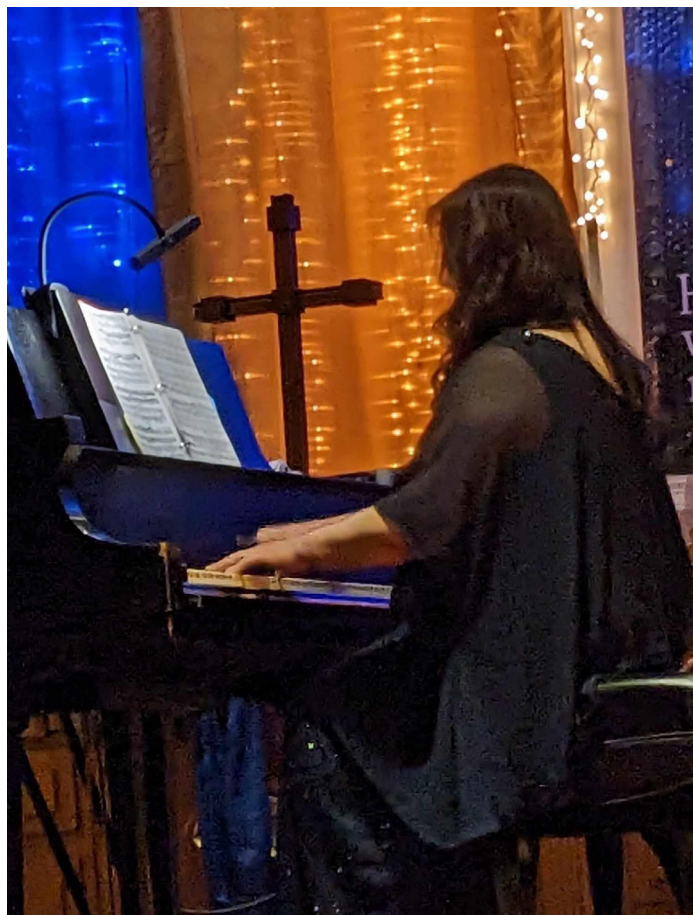
### Extra Mile House

For the past four years, First Baptist Columbia has partnered with Love Columbia through sponsorship of an [Extra Mile House](#), providing transitional housing for families experiencing homelessness or housing instability. In addition to covering costs of maintaining the property, church members clean, repair and furnish the home during transition times between families, while our youth group prepares meals to welcome families on move-in day.

### Music Partnerships

The [Odyssey Chamber Music Series](#), which premiered in 2004 as an outreach of First Baptist Columbia, offers six to seven concerts a year focusing on classical chamber music with an emphasis on highlighting different styles and genres. The series carries the mission of glorifying God while developing community through the arts. In addition to the Odyssey Series, First Baptist Columbia has a strong tradition of opening its sanctuary to music programs and ensembles from across the community for both rehearsals and concerts, including school groups, community ensembles and individual recitals.

- The [Plowman Chamber Music Competition and Festival](#) promotes chamber music among young, non-professional musicians, giving them a chance to perform and win cash awards. It is presented by First Baptist Columbia, the University of Missouri, Missouri Symphony and Odyssey Chamber Music Series. First Baptist Columbia also hosts the competition weekend.







**MARCH 20**  
10:15 AM

**Q&A WITH ROBERT P. JONES**

First Baptist Church Fellowship Hall



**DIANA BUTLER BASS**

Saturday, June 17th  
Lecture at 2:00 pm

Sunday, June 18th  
Q & A at 10:15 am  
Sermon at 11:15 am

First Baptist Church Sanctuary  
1112 E Broadway, Columbia

celebrating 200 years  
**First Baptist Church**  
est. 1823



**JEMAR TISBY**

Sunday, Oct. 15th  
Q & A at 10:15 am  
Sermon at 11:15 am

First Baptist Church Sanctuary  
1112 E Broadway, Columbia

celebrating 200 years  
**First Baptist Church**  
est. 1823

**HOW TO FIGHT RACISM**  
Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice  
JEMAR TISBY

## Sheppard Lecture Series

The Sheppard Lecture Series Fund, established in honor of former Pastor Dr. Lee Sheppard, has provided support to invite nationally known speakers to our church and community for many years. Recent speakers include:

- Robert P. Jones, author of *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*
- Diana Butler Bass, author on contemporary spirituality
- Jemar Tisby, author of *How to Fight Racism: Courageous Christianity and the Journey Toward Racial Justice*
- *The Many*, an intentionally diverse musical group that sings about peace, justice and a world where all belong

## Community Participation

First Baptist Columbia congregants participate in several annual community events, including:

- Hosting a booth at Pride Fest and sharing temporary tattoos and hospitality
- Decorating a float with riders and marching in the Mizzou Homecoming and community Christmas parades
- Providing a convening space and starting point in the church parking lot for the community Juneteenth parade



## Encourager Church

First Baptist Columbia is a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship “encourager church” for missionaries Keith Holmes and Mary VanRheenen. For more than 25 years, the couple has coordinated outreach to Romani people throughout Europe, translating the *Good News* into different Romany dialects from their base in the Netherlands.

In May 2023, members of the mission team went to the Netherlands to see firsthand their ongoing work. In addition, through Keith and Mary’s connections to a Romani church in Moldova, First Baptist Columbia and Cooperative Baptist Fellowship were able to send financial assistance for Ukrainian refugees.



First Baptist Columbia supports various local organizations and ministry partners with budgeted funds and/or volunteer assistance.

- [Voluntary Action Center](#) is a local nonprofit that responds to the immediate basic needs of the individuals and families within our community. The center currently directs the Opportunity Campus, a multiagency effort that will build a 24/7, 125-bed shelter with community resource center and medical clinic for Columbia's unhoused population.
- [City of Refuge](#) is a local nonprofit that serves Columbia's refugee population to fulfill basic needs, assist with education and language skills, and facilitate professional development. In 2023, more than 50 First Baptist Columbia volunteers worked at City of Refuge as part of their ForColumbia city-wide day of service.
- [Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri](#) directs a regional disaster and hunger relief network that acquires and distributes millions of pounds of food annually to partner agencies across a 32-county area.
- [Room at the Inn COMO](#) coordinates sites and volunteers to shelter Columbia's unhoused population, especially in the winter months. In addition to financial support and volunteering, the church's Fellowship Hall has been utilized as a location for overnight shelter and food distribution during cold months. The organization is also partnering to build the Opportunity Campus.
- [Stonebridge House](#) is a new community partnership, founded by a First Baptist Columbia member, that provides housing and guidance for women transitioning from incarceration back to community living. Funding from First Baptist Columbia covers visits with a licensed therapist specializing in trauma for residents, in accordance with the motto of "Prison is traumatic – therapy helps."
- [ForColumbia](#) celebrated its 10-year anniversary to bring Christians together to share God's love by serving our community side by side. Volunteers come together to work on a city-wide annual "day of service" event that addresses needs in our community. First Baptist Columbia leads several projects each year through volunteer and financial support.





First Baptist Church is located on 2.9 acres of property on the southwest corner of the intersection of Waugh Street and Broadway in Columbia, Missouri. The property is beautifully landscaped and enjoys an expansive canopy of majestic mature trees. The facility is one large structure containing four areas:

- *Sanctuary* – Built in 1957, this large vaulted space features seating for 354 persons, a balcony, a baptistry and a 1477-pipe organ. The church’s iconic spire sits over the portico. In addition to holding Traditional worship, the Sanctuary also hosts other civic events and chamber music concerts series.
- *Education Building* – This four-story building houses a fellowship hall, which is also serves as the setting for contemporary Awakenings worship as well as gathering space. Kitchen space adjoins the fellowship hall. Classrooms/conference rooms, church office space, elementary and youth rooms, and gymnasium are found on the floors above..
- *Elevator Tower Building* – Built in 1997, this three-story structure sits adjoining the Education Building and provides elevator access and additional classroom space.
- *Center Connecting Building* – This small one-story structure connects the Sanctuary with the Elevator Tower and Education Building complex. It currently holds the children’s preschool room and additional classroom space.

Significant efforts have been made in the past five years to upgrade and beautify internal and external spaces and make them more functional. These include VMix webcasting system for both services, redesigned Zoom-equipped conference rooms, new north patio entrance to the Sanctuary, and lawn and landscaping improvements.

Green lawn space on the west side of the sanctuary is beautiful and allows for on-the-lawn worship, outdoor picnics, and recreational opportunities for the congregation. The green space is framed by the architectural elements of the sanctuary and the historical Educational Building, presenting a beautiful landscape in the downtown district on the main street of Broadway.

The aging infrastructure and evolving congregational expectations regarding modern building dynamics have prompted the membership to actively pursue renovation of the church. Although this desire has been present for decades, a renewed interest leading up to our 200th anniversary led to consultation with an architectural firm to provide ideas for future possibilities.



# Denominational & Ecumenical Partners

- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF):
  - Leadership of our church assisted with CBF's formation in the early 1990s, and the church formally voted to add CBF to our ministry partnerships.
  - Our previous senior pastor served as CBF national moderator, and others have served in leadership roles with CBF-Heartland.
- American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA):
  - First Baptist Columbia has been affiliated with ABCUSA since its founding.
  - Over the years, pastors and individuals in our church have served in national, Great Rivers Region and Area 5 leadership roles.
- The Alliance of Baptists
- Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty
- Baptist Women in Ministry
- Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists
- Central Baptist Seminary
- National and World Councils of Churches



In preparation for calling a new pastor, First Baptist Columbia completed an in-depth self-study. The information below captures the key results of the process.



## We Seek Church for:

1. Worshipping God
2. Being with and supporting friends
3. Hearing inspirational sermons
4. Progressive theological convictions and social justice

## Goals

Our congregation sees itself as a strong voice for progressive Christianity, seeking to mirror Christ's ministry of acceptance, and striving to be a place of healing and reconciliation for individuals who have faced religious trauma.

- *Strengthening authentic community within the congregation* – Maintain two distinct worship services while coming together more often for combined worship. Explore opportunities for additional small groups, fellowship and other avenues for building community.
- *Increasing inclusivity and accessibility in First Baptist Columbia ministries and facilities* – Expand opportunities for inclusion education and experiences, understanding that it takes intentionality to be a diverse community. Explore what it would take to address the accessibility issue in the sanctuary.
- *Enriching ministry to children, youth and their families* – Form ad hoc Children's Ministry Task Force to perform needs assessment, review best practices and explore ways to build capacity. Increase accessibility for children who are differently abled.
- *Sustaining the Pastoral Residency Ministry* – Continue to manage program for long-term success.

- *Deepening community engagement in Columbia* – Strengthen our engagement, informed by our understanding of how we are called to be God's hands and feet through social justice efforts, ecumenical endeavors and continued involvement in Room at the Inn, ForColumbia and Voluntary Action Center.
- *Expanding external communication* – Increase our social media presence and advertising to make our progressive voice known in the community. Look for opportunities to use our green space. Provide additional opportunities for the church to learn how to invite others to join us.

## Top Concerns

- *Attendance* – Desire for more members and younger families, recognize some separation between two services.
- *Building and Facilities* – Managing aging infrastructure, improving accessibility, planning and executing renovations for increase utility.
- *Loss of Pastors* – Desire to maintain current theology and academic style, fill the roles of two pastors leaving simultaneously (married couple), and concern for overburdening clergy and staff during the interim.

## Pastoral Priorities

When choosing among 15 categories, our congregation ranked preaching, leadership, and pastoral care as top priorities.

- *Preaching* – Be transformative, theologically progressive, scripture-based. Use themes in preaching series. Be authentic, practical, kind, loving, positive and engaging.
- *Leadership* – Work with other pastors as a team, delegate, lead by example, and have overarching vision. Frequently check in with lay leaders, be relational, be consistent with our history and values, be intensely involved with the community. Be well organized and planned. Bridge both services, know congregation, and teach classes.
- *Pastoral Care* – Be available for church members in need. Refer when necessary. Equip church members to help.

## Worship and Faith Development

- Spiritual leader of the congregation and functions as the church's worship leader
- Help the congregation discern God's leading to continue current ministry and mission goals
- Preach in 9:15 a.m. Contemporary/Awakening Service and 11:15 a.m. Traditional Service
- Provide inspiring sermons based on scripture from the lectionary, sermon series or current events
- Conduct combined worship services and brunch worship
- Collaborate with pastors and worship leaders on theme, worship order and music
- Conduct communion, baptisms, weddings and funerals

## Fellowship and Care

- Create a safe place for fellowship and support of all
- Nurture environment of acceptance and trust for all
- Provide time and space for care, encouragement and joy for all
- Visit sick, homebound and counsel church members and refer when needed
- Focus on the growth and diversity of the congregation

## Lead Staff

- Create a partnership and shared leadership with all staff
- Support, develop and encourage staff in faith and skill growth
- Collaborate with pastors, Church Council and congregation to achieve ministry goals
- Coordinate with the church moderator to assure positive functioning of the Church Council
- Provide support to team coordinators and pastors assigned to ministry teams including; Congregational Care, Teaching, Worship, Mission, Telling, Racial Justice and Inclusion, and Administration

## Teaching and Education

- Teach periodic Bible or book study series
- Encourage all to participate in classes, small groups, and individual Bible study

## Denominational and Community Partnerships

- Sustain church partnerships with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, American Baptist Churches USA and Alliance of Baptists
- Develop partnerships with community churches, ecumenical faith leaders and organizations to continue local ministry programs

## Position Accountability

- Position is accountable to the congregation
- Ongoing supervision is provided by the Personnel Committee
- Comply with Covenant of Code of Ethics for Ministerial Leaders

## Candidate Qualities

- A Christian, committed to upholding Baptist principles
- Called by God to the pastoral ministry in general and to the ministry of First Baptist Church of Columbia, Missouri, in particular
- Seminary-trained in theological education from an accredited institution
- Holds a master of divinity or similar degree, with a doctorate desired
- Significant experience in church leadership and supervision
- Characterized by integrity and high ethical standards in their personal life
- Balances professional and personal life
- Strong communication skills for preaching, leading, encouraging and helping others
- Can develop effective stewardship activities, manage financial budgets, and lead a potential capital campaign
- Demonstrated success working well with laypersons to accomplish objectives
- An inspirational servant-leader prepared to lead the church in continuing its mission
- The ability to promote the church's commitment that "Unity does not require uniformity"
- Outgoing, effective in reaching out, and engaging a diverse congregation
- Demonstrated effective supervision of pastors and staff
- Works with the Church Council and congregation to make difficult decisions when necessary
- Builds an environment of collaboration and trust
- Currently ordained by a congregation affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or American Baptist Churches USA

## Anticipated Senior Pastor Covenant Agreement

A covenant agreement that details the commitment of the church to sustain a relationship to support the senior pastor and their spouse and family (if applicable) will be provided. Compensation will be based on candidate's experience and education. Total comprehensive compensation package will include pay; housing allowance; Social Security offset; medical, dental, retirement, life and disability policies; sabbatical; vacation and sick leave; continuing education; and other expense reimbursements.

### How to apply:

Please send cover letter and resume to [pastorsearch@fbc-columbia.org](mailto:pastorsearch@fbc-columbia.org)