

August 5, 2020

the SPIRE



First Baptist Church
columbia



New Outdoor Worship Option Beginning August 9

We are excited about the opportunity to gather in-person and plan to host outdoor services each Sunday (weather permitting) at 9:15 am beginning August 9. We will rotate the music leadership of the service every few weeks to allow for a variety of musical styles to be experienced in-person. Our 11:15 am service will continue to be tailored to an online experience and will also rotate the music leadership of that service to complement and allow for our in-person service. The guidelines for in-person gatherings on the front lawn will apply to the 9:15 am worship services as well. We understand that despite all our precautions, in-person gathering still elevate risks of exposure and encourage our church members to make choices based on what is best for you and your family.

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Fall Book Study

Everything Must Change by Brian D. McLaren

In September, I will be facilitating a discussion of the book *Everything Must Change* by Brian McLaren. Many of you know I am fan of Brian McLaren and often read his work. After reading *Everything Must Change*, I found myself longing to have people to talk about it and decided to invite you to become conversation partners!

The book is easy to read because McLaren's style is not academic. At the same time, the scope of the book is vast and seeks to answer two questions: First, what are the most critical problems in our world today? Second, how does the life and teachings of Jesus address the most critical global problems?

I want to invite you to read the book and then, join me for a discussion. Depending on how many people want to join us, we might have one or two groups meeting. We might have one group meeting via Zoom and another group meeting in-person on the front lawn, while wearing masks and physically distancing.

If you want to join the discussion, first go ahead and order your own copy of *Everything Must Change*, have it shipped to your house and begin reading. Then, email me by August 17 at mcentyre@fbc-columbia.org and let me know you plan to join the study. When I have a good list of people who are interested, I will send out a poll and determine how many groups we will have for discussion and if we will meet online or in-person.



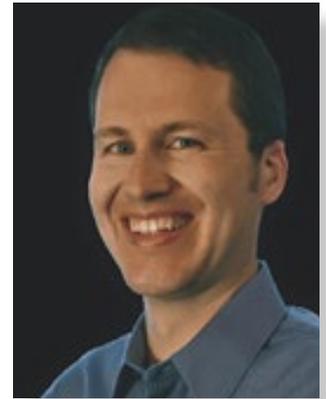
Carl McEntyre



Conversation on Christian Nationalism

August 9 & 16

On August 9 and 16 at 10:15 am via Zoom, Brian Kaylor will be our guest speaker for a conversation on Christian Nationalism. Christian Nationalism is an ideology, which seeks to merge Christian and American identities and in doing so, distorts both the Christian faith and America's constitutional democracy. Christian Nationalism equates being a Christian with being an American and asserts that Christianity should be privileged by the State over other religions. Christian Nationalism implies that to be a good American, one must be Christian.



In the last few years, we have seen a rise in legislation around the country, and in Missouri, which attempts to advance the cause of Christian Nationalism. Some Christians have launched an effort known as "Project Blitz" in hopes of fusing Christianity and American Civic Life. Lawmakers in more than a dozen states used model bills from *Project Blitz*, on topics like encouraging classes on "Bible literacy" in public schools and mandating public schools post "In God We Trust." In April of 2019, our Pastor Carol McEntyre testified in Jefferson City against one of these bills, a biblical literacy bill, which encourages public schools to teach the Bible. Baptists have historically stood for religious liberty for all, and believed that everyone should be free to practice their faith or to have no faith if they so choose. Faith should never be coerced. We hope you will join us for this important conversation about religious liberty for all!

Brian Kaylor is editor & president of Word&Way, associate director of Churchnet, and author of four books on religion, politics, and communication. He graduated with an M.A. and Ph.D. in political communication from the University of Missouri.

First Baptist Book Club - August 11

First Baptist's Book Club has selected *I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness* by Austin Channing Brown. Austin is an activist, a writer, a speaker, and a media producer providing inspired leadership on racial justice in America. In *I'm Still Here*, Brown offers an eye-opening account of growing up Black, Christian, and female that exposes how white America's love affair with "diversity" so often falls short of its ideals.

The book club will meet via Zoom at 7:00 pm on August 11 to discuss the first 6 chapters. Email Pastor Brittany at bnull@fbc-columbia.org for the Zoom link.





Welcome Amy Johns!

We are excited to announce that Amy Johns has joined our staff as the new Director of Music for Traditional Worship! Amy is currently the Coordinator of Music at Columbia College where she teaches a wide range of music classes for music and non-music majors, develops curriculum, assists with show production, and advises students. Amy received a master's degree in Vocal Performance in 2005 and a bachelor's degree in Music in 1996, both from the University of Missouri in Columbia. In addition to her music education and teaching skills, Amy also has experience in the church. She served as part-time Director of Music at First Christian Church in Centralia, MO from 2005 to 2009 where she directed

the Chancel Choir, led congregational singing, provided solo special music, and coordinated two cantatas a year.

A Note from Marques J. Ruff

Dear First Baptist Church Family,

As I type this message to you all, my heart is bursting with gratitude and with love. Many of you wrote such beautiful, heartwarming notes upon my graduation/new job/conclusion of my time with you all. I want you to know that the words and incredibly kind gifts meant a great deal, and will help to sustain me in this transition and new life in Nashville.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to say thank you to the incredible staff at this church. From Brenda, Susan, and Mike who keep this ship afloat, to the ministerial staff which guides all of our souls with grace, dignity, and the help of the Holy Spirit. Special thanks are in order to Pastors Carol, Brittany, and Michael. Thank you for being amazing team players, collaborators, and for being led by the spirit. Pastor Carol, you especially have been a driving force, particularly during my wilderness experience as I awaited the promises of God to come to fruition. Thank you, Shelby, for the creative musical moments we've shared and for allowing God to use you in such a mighty way for the kingdom.

To the choir, how I miss you all. I am sad that our time together was abruptly cut short, but I remain grateful for the many Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings we spent together making a joyful noise to our amazing God. Thank you for trusting me, letting me experiment with new styles, and for being willing to follow me wherever my musical whims took us. Your kindness and generosity have been transformative and a true example of Christ's love. To my dear co-pilot, Colleen, you are the personification of goodness. When I look at you, I see a bright shining light which I know is just the glow of God's hand all over your life. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

One of the cards I received said, "You probably don't know us, but your gift has inspired and enhanced our services." I would like to challenge that statement and say that, whether or not I've ever met you in person, we all know one another as siblings in Christ. Your thoughts, prayers, and kind glances have been felt and received. Thank you for being a welcoming, open and affirming, progressive church that is a bright light in the city of Columbia. I love you all and will continue to pray for you, and ask that you would do the same for me.

In Christ alone,

Marques Jerrell Ruff



Compassion Camp 2020

Compassion Camp concluded on Sunday, August 2, with a drive-thru closing in the church parking lot. Over the past 5 weeks, 35 campers from 22 families have been exploring the theme of compassion in our virtual Vacation Bible School. VBS has looked many different ways for us at First Baptist over the last several years, most notably for the past three years as First Kids Camp. Our VBS team was already revising First Kids Camp towards a family-centered experience, but the pandemic required us to rethink it all again! After receiving feedback from families, we decided to launch a 5 week, completely online, virtual VBS. Kids and their families could join in Zoom calls and watch parties or watch and read lessons at their own pace. Campers learned that compassion means I see your hurt, I feel your hurt, and I will work to ease your hurt. They explored five different ways of compassion: seeing and welcoming, being brave and showing up, loving ourselves, being present with each other, and giving fresh starts. And they learned when we do these things, we show God's love, peace, and justice with the world.

Thank you, First Baptist, for supporting our Kids Ministry and our dream to rethink Vacation Bible School in a safe and fun way during a pandemic. Thank you First Kids Families, for trusting us with this wild and audacious dream to talk about compassion and find a way to have camp even if apart. Thank you to our amazing volunteers who said yes, without fully knowing what that meant. To Bethany James, who explored emotions in a fun and engaging way. To Myra Galloway, who led us in yoga each week, reminding us that connecting to our bodies is essential to self-compassion and our spiritual growth. To Julie Walker, who shared her beautiful voice and guitar skills, teaching campers fun songs and sharing stories that connected so well. To Brenda Rice, who made our drive-thru opening and sending more welcoming with a fabulous photo booth, fun pinwheels, and courageous flag twirling! And to Lillian, our Compassion Camp Director, who not only led us in our opening and sending each week but said yes to something else entirely and was willing to creatively rethink and strategize in order to make this possible. Without your gifts, grace, and compassion, none of this would have been possible.

As we continue through this pandemic together, we don't know exactly what the future holds, but I am hopeful, because our First Baptist Families are filled with God's love and compassion. May we, even apart, continue to grow in compassion together.

Brittany McDonald-Null





forColumbia Workday 2020



Thank you to those who helped serve with our ForColumbia project at Benton Elementary School on Saturday, August 1. Our team, along with several Benton staff and administrators, worked to help create an outdoor nature learning center that will be used this upcoming school year. We prepared elements for the area, cleared and removed unwanted brush, removed fencing to be relocated, and spread a mountain of mulch! It was a fantastic day of service.





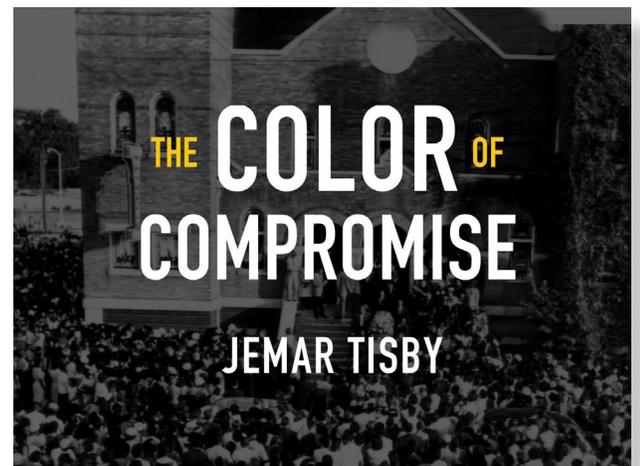
Blizzards with Brittany

Hey First Kids Families! During the month of August, I am excited to announce a different opportunity for connection: Blizzards with Brittany. After an amazing 5 weeks of Compassion Camp and a great time of connection during First Kids Connect, it feels like it is time to take a screen-time break! The Zoom fatigue is real - and I bet you feel it too!

Blizzards with Brittany is an opportunity for kids 3-years-old through those entering 6th grade to connect, to pray together, and to have some screen-free time. Families can sign up for a spot, and I will bring a small Dairy Queen Blizzard of your kid(s) choice and socially distance while spending some time together outside. The time slots are an hour to give some time for travel, and ice cream pick-up but expect the hangouts to be about 45 minutes. Email Brittany for available times and to sign up!

The Color of Compromise August Book Study

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, a small group was meeting to talk about *The Color of Compromise*, a book and video study by Jemar Tisby, which takes readers on a historical journey: from America's early colonial days through slavery and the Civil War, covering the tragedy of Jim Crow laws and the victories of the Civil Rights era, to today's Black Lives Matter movement. Author Jemar Tisby reveals the obvious—and the far more subtle—ways the American church has compromised what the Bible teaches about human dignity and equality.



The group led by Lynne Lampe and Julie Walker are planning to restart their discussion of *The Color of Compromise* in August via Zoom. They are also planning to do some research on racism in Columbia and First Baptist's response throughout the years. If you would like to join the discussion, purchase the book on your own, begin reading, then email Lynne at llampe.editor@gmail.com. To allow for maximum participation, the group is not planning to meet during Sunday Morning Small Group hour and will pick another day and time for the four sessions, to be determined by those who choose to participate.

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Bethany James, Nursery Director
Mike Ide, Custodian

"Return Service Requested"



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