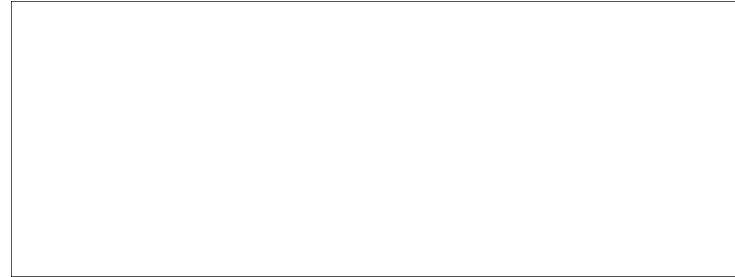


## THE BRIDGE

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# THE BRIDGE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FRANKFORT

JANUARY 2021 NEWSLETTER



*Beloved*  
**COMMUNITY**

FBC 2021 | JOHN 13:1-17

**THERE IS WORK TO DO.  
WE ARE THE PEOPLE TO DO IT.  
ARE YOU READY?**



# Senior Pastor

## Dr. Keith Felton



I think we all realize the pains of 2020 will carry over into at least some of the coming year. Even so, I am glad to see this year come to a close and have great hopes for 2021. With a new year, comes a new theme I want to introduce before we actually get to January 1. Maybe I want the new year to hurry up and get here, but more than that, I would like for all of us to begin thinking about how this theme might impact our family of faith and those in our city and beyond. The phrase 'BELOVED COMMUNITY' is not original to me, but something I have been studying for several years, all the way back to 1999 when I began seriously reading and examining the life of Martin Luther King, Jr. The pinnacle of my MLK Jr studies was my dissertation completed in 2013 as I wrote about how King understood the identity and work of the church. Without going into detail here, the crux of King's ecclesiology boils down to his beliefs about how Christians are to create a 'beloved community' in Christ that manifests the love of God in a hostile world.

The centerpiece for this theme is from the Gospel of John 13:1-17 as Jesus washes the disciples' feet. For me, this powerful story demonstrates the heart of beloved community and what it takes to create and sustain it. The sacrificial spirit, humility, service, care, work and love – the symbolism of the towel, basin, water, cleanliness, Jesus bowed down, the timeframe of being so close to the crucifixion – all of this and much more will help us understand what it takes to build a community of love that serves, proclaims the Gospel, makes disciples and ultimately could heal the world. A community built on love – love of God and neighbor – that demonstrates its love in tangible ways through acts of justice, mercy and humility can heal wounds, bridge divides, give hope and fulfill our purpose of bringing God's Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven.

I am optimistic that FBC can embody this theme in the coming year in an even deeper and more meaningful way than we already do. So let's start the discussion – in our Bible studies, small groups, committees, advisory teams, in our deacon body, in the hallways (when we are able!), through our worship experiences, in our missions, spiritual formation, with our youth and children, in our Zoom meetings – wherever we can – even with our neighbors, friends, co-workers, family and strangers. We start with the question of what does it mean to incarnate a beloved community of Christ? We can also start with John 13 and ask that same question as it pertains to the passage.

I said the following in 2019 when I discussed the theme of 2020, CONNECT-GROW-SERVE: *These themes are not a gimmick for me. They are what I believe to be essential and structural principles for what it means to be a healthy church.* In my tenure as FBC Pastor, I will continually draw from every yearly theme. You've not heard the end of CONNECT-GROW-SERVE, and after 2021, you will continue to hear about creating and sustaining a beloved community in Christ. My prayer is that we pray earnestly about these ideas and faithfully work to manifest their virtue. For those seeking the identity, values, mission and vision of FBC, my prayer is these themes will bring clarity. We can't be just listeners; the themes can't be just promotional materials or PR. We must put feet to our faith and provide substance to theories. The good news is that we already do in so many ways – but these commitments must be renewed all the time. Creativity and improvements are needed. Financial support, volunteer support and new members are also needed. There is work to do. I believe we are the people to do it. Are you ready?



## CHILDREN

### Rev. Amanda Standiford



The concept of beloved community is really at the core of children's ministry. So much of the work of childhood is learning who we are and where we belong. In the coming year, we will continue to create safe spaces for learning and exploring the story of the people of God as well as building relationships through Godly Play, Wednesday night Zoom music and fellowship gatherings, and take-home activity bags. Much of what we do in children's ministry is based around the church year and around forming an identity rooted in the traditions and practices of our faith, and I'm always looking for new ways to help our children deepen their understanding of what it is to be part of a church community. When we reach the point of being able to gather again in person, I look forward to new opportunities for growing and strengthening relationships with both the children and their families and the many wonderful people who volunteer in the children's ministry as we continue to learn together what it is to share in the beloved community.

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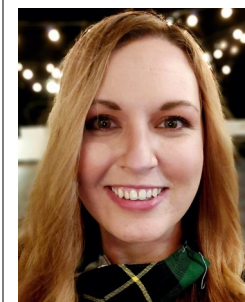
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## STAFFING CHANGES



First Baptist Church is thrilled to welcome Amy Carpenter to the position of Office Manager, beginning January 2021.

Amy grew up in Lexington, Kentucky. She graduated from the University of Kentucky, studying secondary education and political science. Since graduation, Amy has pursued a profession of serving others through the work of several great nonprofit organizations across the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

When not working, Amy enjoys creative pursuits, walking, planning trips to Disney, trying desperately to keep the plants in her garden alive, and spending time with her family. Amy is married to David. Together, they are the proud parents of their son, Nathan, and the proud pet parents of their dog, Fitzsimmons, and cat, Shadow.

Please join in welcoming Amy to the staff of First Baptist Church!

Kara Johnson remains as the church's Director of Communications. This part-time position will work closely with staff and continue our communications goals to 1) connect with people who need help and 2) connect with people who can be helpers.



# MUSIC

Rev. Richard Summers

According to Henri Nouwen "Community is not an organization; community is a way of living. We gather around us people with whom we want to proclaim the truth that we are the beloved sons and daughters of God."<sup>1</sup>

The theme for 2021 is Beloved Community. The music ministry of First Baptist Church seeks to live out this theme as community, as described by Henri Nouwen. When not separated by COVID we gather around each other in ministry teams, or communities, to proclaim the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ through music. But not just through music. It is through praying together, sharing our joys with each other, encouraging one another. Whether vocally in a choir, or through instruments, or by a warm handshake or hug, we proclaim that we are beloved sons and daughters of God. During COVID times, our community has had to move to a virtual one. We have gathered in front of screens and shared in each other's journeys. We have prayed together and played together. We are a community at large and communities in smaller measure. Each ministry team is a unique community and yet part of the larger Music Ministry community which is part of the larger First Baptist Church of Frankfort community. Humans are called upon to be interdependent and the music ministry teams are a great place to plug in during 2021. You are welcome to join the beloved community known as the music ministry of FBC. Whether virtually for now, or in person (hopefully soon), we hope to see you!

<sup>1</sup>Nouwen, Henri J M . A Spirituality of Living (The Henri Nouwen Spirituality Series) (p. 20). Upper Room. Kindle Edition.

# YOUTH

Rev. Marcus Pernell

If there is any one thing that I've not only taken away from the events of this past year, but am still in the process of learning, it is the idea of "beloved community," our 2021 church theme. More specifically, I am in a process of learning to not only be beloved but more importantly, letting others know that they are beloved as well. I wonder if you can relate to any of this.

As we enter into this new year, I want to walk alongside our students and help them live into the following reality: Be Beloved. In my mindscape, this reality serves a twofold purpose. In one sense, I want each of them individually to know and feel that they are loved - whether through being heard, seen, or acknowledged. Likewise, I also want them to know and feel a sense of affirmation. To this point, it makes me wonder what self-affirmation resembles.

In another sense, I want our students to affirm to those around them that they are loved - that they too are heard, seen, and acknowledged. Off the top of my mind, I can't think of more loving and affirming gestures than reaching out to others in these ways. It could resemble something as simple as offering a listening presence or a physical one without even saying a word (even if it's from six feet away).

How will we live this reality of being beloved heading into the new year?



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Rev. Amanda Standiford

We are blessed with so many opportunities for deep community here at First Baptist Church. As I have visited Sunday School classes and taken part in Bible studies and small group book studies these last few months, I've gotten a glimpse into the richness of the relationships among the members of these groups. In a season when many of us have been hungry for in-person gatherings, I've been astounded at the depth of conversation and learning that each of these groups has been able to sustain even when forced to meet digitally. I am grateful for the many ways I have witnessed you being the beloved community for one another, from engaging playfully in Kara's weekly #FundayFridayAtFBC posts on Facebook to making phone calls, sending cards, and taking care of one another's needs during this challenging season. I am looking forward to continuing to expand and grow our opportunities to connect and learn together in the coming year as we seek a more thorough understanding and a deeper practice of what it is to be the beloved community.

# MISSIONS

Michelle Carroll

Missions is the hands on work, the doing of this Beloved Community we seek. As I've learned about the missions FBC already does since I joined you in July, I've seen so much good already at work. So now let's take this year and refine it. Let's ask ourselves if we're making the most impact, if we're working towards solutions most needed. As Keith says every Sunday morning, let's go be the church.

Mission Frankfort Clinic will continue doing great work serving those without access to health insurance. In 2021, we'll begin researching whether the dream of a denture lab as part of MFC is feasible and sustainable, both fiscally and physically. We're working on a new paid position that will mean our service to Spanish speaking patients is more equitable with that to our English speaking patients.

We're welcoming a new permanent director at Emma Quire Mission Center to start 2021 and will hopefully be able to welcome back teams sometime during the year. But beyond that we're going to seek connections, expand the vision beyond a place to house mission teams, and work towards being a hub of activity that creates Beloved Community in Owsley County.

But more importantly than all of that, I hope this year of focus on Beloved Community is one in which you as an individual learn and grow in your understanding of what helping, charity, and being the hands and feet of Jesus can mean. I hope you'll join me in digging into the best ideas and thoughts from theologians, non-profit professionals, and the people on the margins themselves that can help us create change, offer hope, and work towards the Kin-dom of God here on earth in ways that bring dignity, prosperity, offer hope and value. If we're going to be those hands and feet offering help, let's do it in the best way we can.

