

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

I want to start by saying how much I appreciate the work of the Pastor Search Committee – Dwight Lovan, Amy Smith, Stephen Mason, Vickie Mitchell, Dan Shouse, Erica Galyon, Beth Keith, Sam McKown and Julia Rhorer. They served with integrity, privacy, devotedness and a commitment to represent you in the best way possible. Will you make sure to express your thanks to these individuals when you see them? What an excellent team!

I am grateful for all of you who came for the Saturday Town Hall Meeting and Reception for my family. Thank you to those who prepared refreshments. It was much appreciated after a period of questions and dialogue. I enjoyed our conversation in the town hall format and hope to continue that type of healthy church-wide discussion.

I find it difficult to describe all the different emotions I had Sunday, June 9. It was a bit overwhelming at times when I found myself thinking about our shared history. FBC provided my first staff position in 1999. You helped me with seminary costs. You ordained me to the Gospel ministry in 2001. You brought me back into the fold as Minister of Missions in 2016. Then, on Sunday, almost twenty years after I first darkened the doors, I was preaching in view of a call to be the Senior Pastor. I not only saw all of you in the pews, but in my heart I saw many faithful FBC saints who are now cheering us on in the heavenly ‘cloud of witnesses.’

Thank you for this opportunity, and my prayer is you will see my appreciation through dedication, actions and care for our family of faith. I want you to know at the end of the day, this entire search for a minister and weekend of bringing me on as Pastor is actually not about me – it is about us. Church is a social enterprise. Christianity is not a ‘Lone Ranger’ activity. It is all about community. God designed it this way. The Apostle Paul beautifully described it as a body with many parts having various and vital functions. Yes, my role is important, but so is yours. The healthiest church is one where every member is serving and working so the entire body can reach its full potential. One of our goals should be to have 100% of our membership fulfilling a role in our ministries and missions.

Thank you, again, for calling me to serve as Senior Pastor.

In Christ,
Keith
Psalm 115.1

P.S. I am scheduled to officially begin as Pastor July 9. I am attending General Assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Birmingham, AL, from June 16 – 21. I am taking two weeks (last week of June and first week of July) to rest and recalibrate before I start July 9. I appreciate this time to recharge.