

TELL ME ABOUT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF ASHEVILLE

Some people just know us as “the church with the dome.” When you’re downtown, it’s hard to miss our landmark building. But what about the church that meets under the dome? What are we like? Here are our answers to the questions we’re most often asked. If you don’t find answers to all your questions here, please let us know. We would love to share more about our church with you, and hear your story as well.

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Who attends First Baptist Church of Asheville?

Our congregation is made up of people from Asheville and its surrounding communities, from lifelong residents to tourists passing through. We’re a multi-generational church, with some who are just beginning to explore what it means to know God through Jesus, while others are continuing to grow in their understanding of what it means to follow him. Members also come from across the spectrum of politics and culture. We see our diverse fellowship as an exceptional gift in a time of heightened division and cultural upheaval. Here you’ll find an extraordinary church, one that not only surrounds you with Christ’s love, but also challenges you to take up your cross and follow him.

What about your “middle name,” Baptist?

We are proud of our Baptist tradition, but we do encourage folks to recognize the significance of the “First” part of our title, as well. Why? Because, like the very first Baptists from the early 17th century, we remain committed to the reformation and renewal of the church. Our church has deep commitments to essential Baptist concepts like believer’s baptism, the separation of church and state, and religious freedom. However, as we approach the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in October 2017, we’re also trying to imagine what it means to be Baptist in the 21st century and beyond. While the earliest Baptists sought reformation through separation, we’re exploring what it means to seek reformation through reconciliation. We are turning our focus toward new questions, like, “What should a radical Baptist witness look like today?” and, “How can Baptists encourage church unity and ‘the healing of the nations?’”

Are you affiliated with a national Baptist organization?

While we live our faith alongside other Baptists and Christians of all traditions, our church partners with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national network of Baptist churches and individuals primarily located throughout the southeastern United States. Cooperative Baptists are committed to Christ-centered mission and fellowship, with a particular emphasis on mission partnerships with the most neglected people-groups around the world.

Who participates in leadership at First Baptist Church of Asheville?

We find strength in the wisdom and guidance of laity and clergy. Members join with church staff in shaping our future as followers of Jesus. We are committed to the full equality of women and men in the life of our church, so all laity and clergy positions are open to everyone, regardless of gender.

What are our worship services like?

When people attend our worship services, sometimes they're surprised to see things they've experienced in other Christian traditions. This is intentional. We believe we're heirs of the whole Christian tradition, so we seek to exemplify the rich wisdom of Christian worship from the first century to the present. Our service is *liturgical* (defined as "the work of the people"), elegant, scripturally rooted and inspired, with a deep appreciation for musical and other arts, congregational participation, and gospel proclamation. We follow the pattern of the church year, which begins with Advent and Christmas, and continues through the season of Pentecost. As well, we administer the sacraments of baptism and communion on regular Sundays throughout the year. Sermons are lectionary-based, and seek to bring the Bible and everyday life into conversation with each other. Together, we explore the depths of faith, seeking to know God intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Worshiping the God of Jesus Christ is the most important thing we do; it is the primary reason we exist, and the source of our joy. We invite you to join us every Sunday in the sanctuary at 11:00 a.m.

What should I wear?

Our members and guests come from all walks of life. Wear whatever feels comfortable to you.

Where should I go when I arrive?

If you intend to come to a Sunday morning Bible study at 9:45, park in the lot adjacent to Charlotte St. (near the State Employees Credit Union), and enter through the Atrium doors. There you will be greeted and directed to find a class that interests you. The Atrium is also next to the children's building, and a convenient entrance for those with infants and young children. If you are coming to worship, you may park in the Charlotte St. lot, or the Oak St. lot, which sits between the sanctuary entrance and the Downtown YMCA. Enter through the main sanctuary doors, where ushers will greet you, offer you an order of worship, and help you find a seat. Signs are posted conveniently throughout the church to help you find your way. For additional guidance, please call the church office.

Do you have programs for children and youth?

We have exceptional programs and ministries for children and youth. In addition to regular Sunday morning classes, there are Wednesday evening programs that run from September through May. During the summer, the church leads an array of camps for children, including Vacation Bible School. Youth meet regularly on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, and take mission and recreational trips throughout the year. Many children and youth are involved in the church's music ministry, from the children's choir to the sanctuary orchestra. (Click [here](#) for more information about our children and youth.)

Are you open and accepting? Will I be welcomed no matter who I am?

We are a gentle and hospitable community, bound by deep and lasting friendships with God and neighbor. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we can't imagine being anything other than a caring and compassionate church, committed to serving our neighbors, community, and world. Whoever you are and wherever you're from, you will find here a warm welcome and a new hope.

What about people with special needs?

You will find people of all abilities engaged in every aspect of our church's life, from leading in worship to mission work and Bible study. We have a Sunday morning class uniquely suited for those with special needs. You may also be interested in our FirstShine Summer Camp for children with special needs [link].

What about membership?

There are several ways of joining our church. Primarily, becoming a member of the church happens by profession of faith and baptism. It is by the sacrament of baptism that we are made members of Christ's body, the church. If you have already been baptized, you may join our congregation by transfer of letter (if coming from another Baptist church), or by statement of faith (if coming from another Christian tradition). To become a member is to say "yes" to the accountability of caring for one another, discerning and sharing your gifts, and participating in the mutual encouragement and support of the community. You can learn more about membership by speaking with one of our ministers, or by calling the church office.

Do I have to be a member of the church to participate?

While we require membership for certain leadership positions, we encourage members and non-members alike to be full participants in worship services, Bible study groups, and ministry projects in the church. If you are in the area temporarily, or wish to retain your membership in another church while affiliating with us, you may join by "watchcare."

How can I learn more?

You may find more about our mission and ministry, learn of opportunities for study and growth, view a worship service, or listen to a Wednesday night Bible study, on our website: www.fbca.net. Consider attending a Sunday morning Bible study class and worship service, or join us for our Wednesday evening fellowship meal at 5:00 PM. You are also welcome to give us a call at 828-252-4781, or email David Blackmon, our Coordinating Pastor, at dblackmon@fbca.net. You may want to ask that one of the ministers call you to set up a time to meet in your home or at the church office to talk about our church and your journey. Our doors are open. You are welcome. Let's take another step together.