



What Membership Means

What does it mean to say, "I am a church member"?

Each Sunday, I offer an invitation to membership just before our final hymn. Many Sundays of the year, people come forward to join the church, making public their intention to become members of Christ's body through baptism. It's a joyous occasion when someone joins, and in those blessed moments I'm honored to be a "doorman in the house of God" (Ps. 84:10).

Then again, I believe time and tradition have worn the term and concept of *membership* down to the nub, so that it has become one of those churchy words we use without really thinking about what it means or why it's important.

Consider how diluted the concept of membership has become. We can be "members" of countless organizations—civic clubs, country clubs, grocery stores, the Y. For \$45, we can get a "Sam's Sav-

ings Membership" at Sam's Club. I once had a membership at Costco, but let it expire. I never could find what I was looking for.

Like many in my generation, I tend to be suspicious of institutions, clubs, and groups that require membership. I follow Groucho Marx's philosophy. Once a member of the Friar's Club of Beverly Hills, Marx sent them a letter stating, "PLEASE ACCEPT MY RESIGNATION. I DON'T WANT TO BELONG TO ANY CLUB THAT WOULD ACCEPT PEOPLE LIKE ME AS A MEMBER."

Unlike membership in clubs, associations, and other institutions, church membership makes a far more radical and comprehensive claim on us. The church is set apart as a living, breathing organism tended by the living God, "the vinegrower" (Jn. 15:1). Jesus calls his disciples branches of "the true vine." "I am the vine," he says, "you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (15:5). Those who don't abide in the vine "wither." Membership in the church is different than all other kinds because it is life-giving and life-saving.

Likewise, Paul describes believers as "limbs" of Christ's body. "For just as the body is one and has many members (limbs), and all the [limbs] of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ" (1 Cor. 12:12). Following Jesus, Paul shows us that joining the church means becoming a physical, bodily extension—a *limb*—of the Risen Jesus in the world.

We may compare the ties that bind us in membership to the bonds of marriage. In the dying and rising of our baptism, we are made "one flesh" with Christ's body. "Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate" (Mk. 10:9).

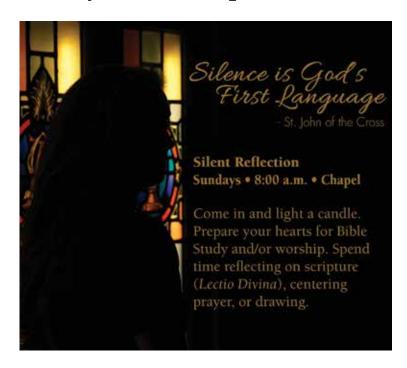
This kind of membership stands above all other kinds. While social, civic, and commercial organizations link membership with doing or consuming, church membership is grounded in *being* bound to God and one another. To be a church member is to live in the unceasing conviction that we are mystically attached to God and one another through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I say all of this to illuminate the richness and depth of what membership means, so that we may recognize the power of this word in our congregation. A church that knows the true meaning of membership is the church where, "if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it" (1 Cor. 12:26). In our suffering, and in our rejoicing, we are *membered* to the broken, yet risen body of Christ.

With apologies to Groucho, I'd like to say how grateful I am to be bound to such a loving God, and to a church who would accept someone like me as a member.

— Mack Dennis

Sundays at First Baptist Asheville



Paddle-n-Plant Thursday, March 8 • 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.



Sediment is a major polluter in our river basin, clogging fish and aquatic habitats, increasing water temperatures, and transporting toxic substances. We are helping to reduce the amount of sediment that flows into our rivers by planting live-stakes along eroding riverbanks. These stakes will grow into trees that will stabilize the sides of the rivers and creeks where we plant them, and will reduce the overall amount of sediment getting into the river. For more information, contact Marian Arledge at 828.321.2972 or mariansadler@gmail.com.

Sponsored by the Creation Care Team.

Why Bible Study?	
As followers of Christ, we need one another to help us grow in faith.	In the context of life-giving community, we share and learn from each person's unique experiences with and understandings of God, as we explore scripture and our lives.
We develop authentic friendships in which people care for one another, rejoicing when one rejoices, and weeping when another weeps.	Life-giving community is where the church begins to share its mission of hope, expressing the love and grace of God made known to us in Jesus.

Bible study connects us to worship; worship connects us to Bible study. We need both.

Bible Study Communities for all ages

- 9:25 a.m. Senior Adult Assembly, MB119
- 9:35 a.m. Kids Connect for grades 1-5, CB310
- 9:45 a.m. Bible Study for all ages



Hospitality Greeter Team

"When a guest comes, Christ comes"

Hospitality is a celebrated Christian virtue. The first impression most people have of our church family, and maybe of the Christian faith itself, is formed by how they are cared for and welcomed by those they meet.

Faithful volunteers are always needed to be a welcoming presence as people enter the church on Sunday mornings. If you are interested in being a greeter on Sunday morning, please contact Tommy Bratton at 828.252.4781 or tbratton@fbca.net.

Wednesday Fellowship & Formation

Please join us each Wednesday evening as we gather to share a meal and fellowship around tables, followed by Bible study and activities for all ages.

Weekly Schedule

5:00 p.m. Fellowship Meal in the Dining Room

Cost: Children/\$3, Adults/\$7, Senior Adults/\$6, Salad Bar Only/\$6, Family maximum/\$20

6:00 p.m. Children: Agapekids

Youth: Agape

Adults: Chapel Vespers and small groups

7:00 p.m. Sanctuary Choir rehearsal

Wednesdays through March 21 • 6:00 p.m. • Sanctuary Celtic Evening Liturgies for Lent

You are invited to this contemplative evening worship experience, with prayers and liturgy informed by the Celtic tradition. This service invites you to enter into a place of rest, prayer, and reflection. The atmosphere is one of stillness and peace. Musically, you will hear expressions from Celtic and other local traditions. Silence has a place of importance at various intervals as well. Visually you can expect to see a darkened space with many lighted candles. Each week, there will be a homily around the faithful practices of discipleship. Often, you will hear testimony from one of our church members.

The Celtic Evening Liturgy is a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend, family member, or acquaintance to join you. This service is intended to be inclusive and welcoming of all people. We invite you to this experience, hoping it will allow you a deeper place of spiritual attentiveness, a place where you experience God in your midst.

Wednesdays, April 11-May 16 Chapel Bible Study

Wednesdays, April 11-25

Creation Care: Tending the Fragile Web

- April 11 Gardening with Native Plants (Buncombe County Master Gardeners)
- April 18 Composting for the Home Gardener (Asheville Greenworks)
- April 25 It's All About Recycling (Asheville Greenworks)

Faith Leader Breakfast

Monday, March 19 • 8:30 a.m. • Dining Room

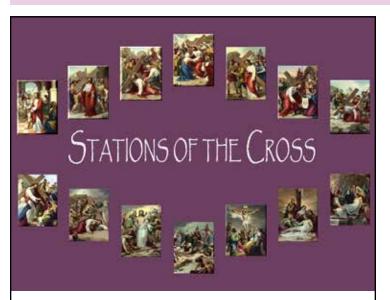
Catalytic Collaboration: Inviting People of Faith into Climate Engagement Conversation with Rev. Dr. John Frey



Rev. Dr. John Frey works at the intersection of sustainability and spirituality while inviting others to help bring restoration and wholeness to all of creation. He serves Cypress Creek Christian Church in Spring, TX as Teaching Pastor, while leading Hewlett Packard Enterprise's IT efficiency and sustainability outreach with customers. John has participated in climate research around the globe with researchers studying impacts on ozone depletion, pollinator species, forestry carbon sequestration, coffee quality, and community survival.

John's work has been featured in several books and in global media and he regularly shares his expertise with the next generation of leaders at universities around the world and at international conferences. He has also shared his expertise with government leaders at the White House, E.U. Parliament, U.S. House, U.S. Senate, and NASA. He is based in Texas where he enjoys trail running, brewing IPA's, and kayaking with his wife Stacey and his two adult children.

This event is sponsored by the Creation Care Team.



Jesus' passion teaches us what love looks like.

— Michael Battle

The *Via Dolorosa* (Latin, "Way of Sorrows" or simply "Painful Way") is a road within Jerusalem that is said to be the path that Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion. This 2,000 feet path is today marked by nine Stations of the Cross, with a remaining five stations located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. From the past centuries through today, the *Via Dolorosa* is a celebrated place of Christian pilgrimage. The faithful and seekers alike come to walk the path that Jesus walked, searching their own hearts and discovering Jesus' path of self-giving love.

In scripture, the journey to the cross begins a couple of days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The religious leaders, who saw Jesus as a threat to their fragile claim to power, sought to arrest him.

During Holy Week, March 25 – April 1 we will set up fourteen Stations of the Cross in the windows of the chapel. There will be a booklet with scripture, prayers, and questions to guide our journey through the Stations, reflecting on Jesus' journey, as well as our own.

Jubilee • Tuesday, March 20 11:00 a.m. • Crocker Auditorium Class Act Singers - Women's Barbershop Quartet

All senior adults are invited to join us for fellowship, programs that inspire, entertain, and inform, and a delicious meal in our Dining Room. The cost is \$3 for the meal, and first-time guests eat free. Please contact Leah Brown at 828,252,4781 or lbrown@fbca.net for more information.

NEW! Jubilee/Prime Time On The Road Tuesday, April 17 • 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Join us for an exciting day trip to the Titanic Museum in Pigeon Forge, TN, followed by lunch at the Applewood Farm House!

Guests may choose one of the following: Southern Fried Chicken, Sugar Cured Ham, Homemade Meatloaf, Apple Julep Grilled Chicken, Chicken & Dumplings, Pork Loin Vegetable Soup, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Buttermilk Biscuit and Apple Cobbler. Choice of Coffee, Tea, Soft Drink or Water

The price is \$38 per person and your payment is due at time of registration. Space is limited to 25. Please drop by the church office or see Leah to make your reservation. **The deadline to register is Monday, April 9.**

Senior Adult Sunday Sunday, May 6 • Noon • Dining Room

Enjoy a luncheon celebrating our 50- and 75-year members following worship on this special day. The cost per person is \$5 and reservations are required for this event. The menu is Chicken Salad with Croissant, Broccoli Salad, Fruit, and a surprise chocolate dessert. Please contact Leah Brown at 828.252.4781 by Sunday, April 29 if you would like to attend.

Earth Day Vigil April 22 • 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Sacred Garden at First Baptist Church of Asheville

The Creation Care Alliance of Western North Carolina invites you to join us for a vigil celebrating God's creation and calling on people of faith to care for it. We will gather outside of First Baptist Church of Asheville for an afternoon of song, reflection, and to hear messages of inspiration and action from local faith and community leaders. All are welcome!

Crossroads After School Program (CAP)

First Baptist Church of Asheville launched the Crossroads After School Program (CAP) in the fall of 2011. We are midway through our sixth year. More than 48 volunteers serve 20-24 at-risk K-3rd graders from Claxton and Jones Elementary Schools. Our students are provided a well-rounded program with gym and snack time, individual tutoring, music with Miss Sue, chapel time with Mr. Tommy and Miss Amy, and Wednesday night dinner. Transportation is provided from the school to church and from church to home. The church also provides a monthly bag of groceries to each family, Christmas presents for the children, as well as mittens, hats, shoes, and coats as needed.



And on top of all that, we have fun together! Your giving to First Baptist makes all this possible. Tutors have seen academic gains for many of these kids, along with growth in self-esteem and a sense of belonging. One student last year tested at early 2nd grade reading level at the beginning of 3rd grade, then went on to finish the

year testing at grade level. His confidence and willingness to tackle harder texts was gratifying to see.



This program impacts the students not only academically, but by having a special mentor care about them and love them. Our church is a safe space for them to come each week where they can have fun and expand their horizons. The volunteers enjoy giving their time out of their love for children and a desire to help those coming from difficult situations. It is a way for all of us to respond out of our abundance to give to those who have much less.

— Elaine Bagley

A CAP Story

Through a generous donation from a church member in the winter of 2018, we were able to give each child in CAP a blanket. On the Wednesday night we shared this gift, two of our girls were absent. The next Wednesday the girls came to us and asked if they could have a blanket too. Blankets are important.

Because we knew an extra cold winter night was coming, we purchased warm winter coats just in case a child needed one. That first night of bitter cold two of our children came with only sweat shirts. They left with warm coats and gloves. How good it is to share with God's beloved children!



- Susan Burns



March 11 • 9:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m. • Atrium

Members and friends of First Baptist Church of Asheville live their faith through volunteering across our community. On Sunday, March 11, we will welcome a dozen of our partners from our church and community. Take a few moments before Bible study and after worship to visit their booths and learn more about ways you can make a difference in our community. You can also sign up for some of the teams coming together to serve on our churchwide missions day on April 21.

A CAP Prayer

Father, we humbly approach your throne of grace with our prayers for the Crossroads After School Program at First Baptist Church of Asheville. We ask your blessings on the participants and their families. We also thank you and ask your blessing on the volunteers and tutors. We pray Lord that you will guide and direct us and let your face radiate with joy because of us...give us your peace. Amen.

— Denis Hill

Lunch at the Crossroads

The Lunch at the Crossroads ministry began in February 2004 with one meal per month being served. Blessed with a church budget line item and special gifts, the ministry has grown to four meals per month and includes devotions, the meal, personal conversations, and a movie with popcorn. Food and clothes closets are open and haircuts are offered.

In 2017, approximately 5,800 meals were served. There are 72 passionate volunteers serving the Lord in the ministry, with 35 serving on a weekly basis. This ministry is directed by the Lord in His teachings in Matthew 25:31-46.

Over these 14 years, we have concentrated on building personal re-

lationships in a Christian setting. Moving from accepted language and action in one environment to another takes time, sometimes years. We now watch the verbiage we use to express ourselves, remove our hats when a prayer is offered and greet each other with a prayer of "God Bless You. Glad you are here." Many hugs, initiated from both sides, are exchanged. An aura of trust, safety and security fills the room. The voices of laughter can always be heard.

Many guests suggest subjects for prayers; themselves, others, and events.

Our guests are always, always, invited to attend the weekly scheduled worship services. Many have come to Bible Study and worship services on Sundays. A few have become members of the church family.

Frequently our guests need a bed, or sleeping bags, tents, etc. to brave sleeping outside. Church members always, immediately step up and meet these needs.

New volunteers are always needed.

—Everette Clark

Vanderbilt Ministry

About 16 years ago our pastor delivered a sermon on First Baptist Church of Asheville (FBCA) focusing on the needs of five different groups of people living and visiting Asheville's downtown area. Our challenge was for FBCA to begin thinking about how the needs of these people might be served. The James Body of Christ Bible study class met to discuss what might be done. A book study using *The Prayer of Jabez*, found in 1 Chronicles 4:10 emphasized Jabez's expectation that God would grant a prayer request for something good to happen.

Low income senior citizen housing complexes, was one downtown area mentioned in the sermon. The class decided to focus on bringing a ministry to Vanderbilt Apartments. The ministry began as a Bible study that has now continued for 15 years, meeting every other Tuesday afternoon.

As the time at Vanderbilt continued it became obvious that there was a serious food need for the residents. We set up an account with Manna FoodBank to purchase food for the residents. FBCA and NCCBF partnered to budget grants that allow Vanderbilt to continue meeting food needs. Last year, Battery Park Apartments, were added to the Manna project. More than 150 residents of both apartment complexes are benefitting from this food service.

The cost of food purchased at Manna ranges from free to about 15 cents a pound, thanks to donations from grocery companies, churchs, individuals, and others; and the volunteers who sort and package the food. First Baptist Church of Asheville has two such teams of volunteers. Our Senior Manna Team works on the fourth Thursday of each month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. If a senior would like more information about this team contact Ed Graham at edgraham03@gmail.com of 828.628.5857 or call the church office at 828.252.4781 for more details.

First Hands Saturday, April 21

First Baptist Church of Asheville fans out across our community on April 21.
Mission opportunities include projects focused on caring for our planet, our neighbors down the street, and others across our community. Set aside the day to serve alongside friends. Watch for signups beginning in March.

MANNA Foodbank Opportunities

Volunteer along with other First Baptist Church of Asheville members to help box food or make weekend snack bags for children in need. Sign up at the shack in the Atrium or call the church office. This mission opportunity is family friendly and children are welcomed.

April 10 • 6:00-8:00 p.m. April 26 • Senior Adult Team • 1:00-3:00 p.m.

FirstShine Summer Camp August 6-9

First Baptist Church of Asheville hosts a free fun-filled day camp for teenagers and young adults in our community who have special needs. Many helping hands are needed to make this possible. Maybe your Bible Study class would like to cook a lunch for the camp or you would like to volunteer as a one-on-one counselor. FBCA volunteer youth and college counselors are welcome to apply. We also need a volunteer day nurse, special needs teachers, and adult helpers. Please consider volunteering and making a young adult's summer bright!









Urban Immersion Boston 2018

Urban Immersion Cost: \$125/person

This cost covers housing, transportation around Boston, a ticket to the Red Sox game, and all other group tours and admissions.

Additional Costs: flight & food

There will be no arrangement for a group flight, so each participant must arrange his/her own flight to and from Boston. Daily breakfast and snacks will be included, but each participant is responsible for all other meals.

About this Urban Immersion

There are three primary goals for this trip: (1) to experience the local Boston culture and history through a theological lens; (2) to nurture deeper friendships in faith with young adults at FBCA; (3) to provide time and space to engage in significant conversations about life and faith as Christ-followers in the 21st century.

Each day of this immersion, we will set out to explore parts of city - the historical, the popular, and the spiritual. Along the way, we will find moments for theological reflection and devotion. Participants should expect to spend most days out and about in the city, with occasional times for leisure and rest.

Specifics

We will be staying at The Walker Center, an historic ecumenical retreat center about 10 miles outside the city. Most of our transportation will be by way of the public transit system. In addition to attending a Boston Red Sox game, we will visit: the First Baptist Church in America (Providence, RI), the first college in America (Harvard University), the first Christian Science Church in America, and many sites along the Freedom Trail.

Registration

There are a limited number of spots for this trip. To register, an online form must be submitted, along with a \$50 non-refundable deposit.

Contact Casey Callahan at 828.252.2781 or ccallahan@fbca. net for more information.



Youth come celebrate the end of the year in the sand and the surf of Caswell Beach. We'll enjoy thoughtful discussions, group games and challenges, and evening parties, as well as group affirmations and senior rites of passage.

Caswell Retreat Cost:

The cost is \$150/student when registered online by April 16. There is a \$15 cost reduction for each additional sibling.



UNIDIVERSITY

SUMMER CAMP JULY 21-28, 2018

Experience a truly unique camp set on the campus of the University of Tennessee. Choose from a list of creative electives and seminars, attend thought-provoking worship sessions, and enjoy free time and recreation on the campus. Prior to camp, our group will spend two challenging days doing roof repairs in Knoxville.

Camp Cost

The cost is \$360/student.

Deposit

\$100 due upon registration.



Wednesdays 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Agapekids is a time for preschoolers and children to participate in missions, faith development, and worship. Childcare provided for children under age 3.

- March Focus: Prayer Stations and Spiritual Practices
- **April Focus:** Creation Care

Contact Amy Stertz at astertz@fbca.net or 828.252.4781 for more information.

Join Us at the Movies



As we focus on Creation care in April, we invite your family to join us to see Disney's Earth Day Movie.

We'll be going early afternoon on April 28.

Registration will be available in early April.

Holy Week for Families

Sunday, March 25 - Palm Sunday

Children will wave palm branches at the beginning of worship. We'll practice during Bible Study.

Wednesday, March 28 - No evening activities

Thursday, March 29 - Maundy Thursday

Noon • Foot Washing Service

5:00 p.m. • Dinner

6:00 p.m. • Worship

Friday, March 30 - Good Friday

Noon • Worship

Sunday, April 1 - Easter

7:00 a.m. • Sunrise Service

8:30 a.m. · Worship

9:45 a.m. • Bible Study

11:00 a.m. • Worship



What is Advocacy Camp?

Advocacy Camp is a camp that will help children learn about needs in the community and our call to respond as Christians.

This camp will be a two-day camp immediately after the school year ends, and will be open to rising 5th-7th graders who are active in the life of our church.

The focus will be hunger. Our children will learn about and help with *Lunch at the Crossroads* and Manna FoodBank.





Academy for the Arts Upcoming Events

• Thursday, March 22 • Honors Recital • 7:00 p.m. • Crouch Chapel

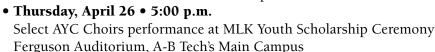
The Academy for the Arts will spotlight some of its finest students in this Honors Recital. Invite a friend and join us for a lovely evening of music and for a reception to follow. The recital is free and open to all!

• Sunday, April 22 • Academy Sunday at First Baptist Church of Asheville • 11:00 a.m. • Sanctuary

Join us for Sunday morning worship as we celebrate the ministry of the Academy. We will hear from several of our AFTA students throughout the service. We look forward to honoring our students, their families, and our AFTA faculty. This is also a time to express great gratitude to the First Baptist Church of Asheville family for such support and encouragement throughout the year.

Asheville Youth Choirs Upcoming Events

- Sunday, March 4 10:30 a.m.
 Concert Choir at Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Sunday, March 11 11:00 a.m. High School Chorale at St. Barnabas Catholic Church Middle School Chorale at Grovestone Baptist Church



- Saturday, April 28 7:30 p.m.

 High School and Middle School Chorales performance with Asheville Symphony Chorus

 Arden Presbyterian Church
- Sunday, April 29 11:00 a.m. High School and Middle School Chorales at First Baptist Church of Asheville for Youth Sunday



Meet the AFTA Team



Abi Enockson, Assistant Director

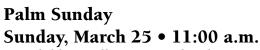
Abi joins the AFTA team after three years in St. Louis, MO, where she managed marketing and copyrights for MorningStar Music and ECS Publishing Group. A native of Fargo, ND, Abi graduated with a degree in Music on viola and Management Studies from St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN). Her passion for both people and the arts has led her to work with several nonprofit organizations and she is thrilled to be working with AFTA.

Rebecca Bond, Financial Assistant

Rebecca holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies from the University of Central Florida, as well as a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership from Webster University. After a decade in project management/financial analysis, Rebecca decided that her definition for happiness could not be achieved while working in a corporate environment, so she quit her job and moved to Asheville. Rebecca has been singing and playing music for most of her life, and is delighted to be working at the Academy for the Arts.



Holy Week Worship



Our children will process with palms.

Maundy Thursday Foot Washing Thursday, March 29 • Noon

This experience will take place in the Sacred Garden and will be a remembrance of Jesus' example in the Upper Room, calling us to selfless service of others.

Maundy Thursday Worship Service Thursday, March 29 • 7:00 p.m.

Hymns, scriptural meditation, music by the Adult Choir, and a special observance of the Lord's Supper will help worshippers to faithfully remember the sacrifice of Christ.

Good Friday Service Friday, March 30 • Chapel • Noon

Recalling the death of Jesus and offering prayers for the world will make this thirty-minute experience of worship simple, yet powerful.

Easter Sunrise Service Sunday, April 1 Sacred Garden • 7:00 a.m.

Breakfast to follow in the Dining Room.

Easter Worship

Sunday, April 1 • Sanctuary • 8:30 and 11:00 a.m.

The resurrection of Jesus will be celebrated with baptism, flowered crosses, Easter lilies, and music offered by the Adult Choir and Brass Quintet.

First Baptist Church of Asheville

Freedom. Friendship. Faith.

5 Oak Street, Asheville, NC 28801 • 828.252.4781 • www.fbca.net Child Development Center: 828.252.3234 • Fax: 828.254.2302 **Sunday Worship:** 11:00 a.m. Sanctuary • 9:45 a.m. Bible Study for all ages

Minister on Call

A minister is on call 24/7 to support you in times of need. To contact the minister on call, dial 828.252.4781. The deacon of the week can be reached through the church office or by contacting the minister on call.