

# THE VISITOR



## *Pledges Are Key Components of Installation Service*

Sunday, August 28, during the morning worship service was a time of celebration and consecration, as FBC Muncie officially installed Pastors **Jonathan Balmer** and **Kendall Ellis** as co-pastors.

Taylor University student Kizito Mayao, who is working toward a master of arts in Higher Education, opened the service by singing “Today” with a backup choir. The song is a call to worship composed by Kizito and FBC Muncie’s worship arts pastor, **Dr. Clifton Davis**.

Christian Ministries, Muncie Mission, and Riverside Baptist Church sent representatives to bring greetings and prayers for the new relationship between the church and the pastors.

Two members of the denominational staff at American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky in Greenwood, IN, played lead roles in the service. Rev. Mark Thompson, Executive Minister, preached the sermon, focusing on the new opportunities that this new relationship has brought to the pastors and to the FBC family. Rev. Mark Spencer, also from the ABC organization, led the installation process in which Jonathan and Kendall pledged their willingness to serve and the church pledged ongoing support to the co-pastors for their efforts.

**“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?”**

ISAIAH 43:19



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# Volunteer Discipleship in America's Churches Is Changing

Volunteers keep churches going. From teaching children to leading worship, preparing food, or repairing the church building, volunteers are an important part of operating the church.

A culture of volunteerism in church is more than just getting things done, though. Volunteering is discipleship. According to blogger Paul Alexander, a pastor of Sun Valley Community Church, a nondenominational church with several campuses in the Phoenix area, "It's not about filling roles and getting ministry done through people. It's not about what we want *from* people, but rather what we want *for* people. . . . It's discipleship because volunteering and living an 'others first' life is the very essence of what it means to live like Jesus."

Co-pastor **Jonathan Balmer** said, "Participating in church life is a way we share in Christ and one another."

"I'm reading a book right now by Myles Wertz entitled *From Isolation to Community: A Renewed Vision for Christian Life Together*. Over and over again Wertz reminds us that, as a gathered body, 'we share in Christ and each other and are changed by that exchange' (p. 37). Church is different from being gathered in a movie theater, where you're part of a crowd and receiving a production," said Jonathan. "It's different from just being an individual, taking in information alone. Church is different because it's being part of a community, the body of Christ, in which we *participate in* God's work in the world—that is part of its joy."

Jonathan went on: "To grasp that joy, we must walk as disciples together. That happens even in the 'mundane' day-to-day of life.

It happens in the church office, when reaching out to those who are sick or ill, when preparing a meal, when gathered over prayer and Scripture. And that's what we want people to experience: God and one another, Christ and the body of Christ."

Unfortunately, as it has impacted every other area of community life, COVID-19 has somewhat impacted the numbers of volunteers in churches across the United States. According to Gallup, 35 percent of Americans reported volunteering for a religious organization last year, down from 38 percent in 2020 and 44 percent in 2017.

This trending decline of church volunteers is due in part to the dip in church attendance across the country. In its summer '22 edition, *Christianity Today* reports, "While people steadily returned to church services in the first half of 2021, the trend hit a plateau. Going into the third year since COVID-19, congregations and their leaders are left with the reality that people who worshiped alongside them before may not be coming back."

Something else that can impact church volunteer numbers is the congregation's demographic composition. Studies showed that Americans 35 to 54 years old were most likely to volunteer. By contrast, the Pew Research Center shows that this prime volunteer demographic makes up only about one-third of the adults attending Evangelical Protestant Churches. This greatly impacts volunteer participation.

While these post-COVID statistics may be sobering, they also depict a world full of opportunity.

"Participating in church life is a way we share in Christ and one another."

Jonathan Balmer,  
Co-Pastor

**Co-pastor Kendall Ellis** reflected that First Baptist has a history of strong volunteers that God will continue to build upon as we love our neighbors inside and outside the church.

"It can be scary to hear about declines in church attendance or volunteers. Our brains start going in circles. Where is the church heading? What happens if no one steps up? What are we going to stop doing because we don't have enough people to help? While normal, these are the wrong questions to ask. These questions come from a scarcity mindset," Kendall said.

"But Christians can celebrate because we worship the God of abundance! We serve the God who fed 5,000 people with a little boy's lunch. We serve the God who changed the world through the resurrection testimony of two 'nobody' women. I mean, have you ever heard the worship song 'How Great is Our God'?" said Kendall.

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“I really love that song because it asks an unanswerable question. Anytime you try to quantify how great God is, you put God in a box in which God cannot be contained. God is infinitely greater and bigger than even our wildest dreams or hopes.

“Since reading *Journey Down Jefferson Street* and *We Are the Clay*, I am amazed at how God used so many volunteers to love and serve others as Christ has loved us. Since starting our ministry at FBC, Jonathan and I have been encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm of volunteers in the church office, Deacons ministry, and on CCT as they address the needs of others. This is a strong foundation of discipleship that God will continue to use in the future.”

Like many congregations across the country, FBC needs more volunteers. This is a fact. But this is not a problem to be fixed; it’s an opportunity to celebrate God’s faithful abundance. It’s not a question of *if* God *can* use you. It’s a matter of *how* God *will* use you as part of the body of Christ. It’s a matter of rolling up your sleeves, trying something new, and asking, “How great is our God?” You may be surprised to see how God answers while you serve. 🏛️

### Join Us!

## “Fresh-Brewed Life” Women’s Breakfast

Saturday, October 1, 2022, 10:00 a.m–12:00 noon  
First Baptist Church  
309 E. Adams Street, Muncie

Be part of breakfast, fellowship, and a short message from speaker and childhood education specialist Dr. Kay Stickle.

Topic–“You’re the LIGHT on Fresh-Brewed Street: Wisdom from Sesame Street”

Registration begins September 12. A link will be emailed that day, or you may call the church office at 284-7749 to reserve a spot.

(Childcare is available by reservation for those attending the event.)



*Fresh-Brewed Life*  
FBC WOMEN'S BREAKFAST

## *FBC Has Many Volunteer Opportunities*

When you look around First Baptist Church Muncie, you see a group of about 25–30 volunteers doing most of the tasks needed to provide leadership, support, and ongoing operations for the church. See p. 9 for a complete list of opportunities.

An example of a task that has a beginning and an end would be the Pastoral Search Team which operated for more than a year to bring new pastors **Jonathan Balmer** and **Kendall Ellis** to the church. Other tasks such as staffing the FBC office each weekday are ongoing needs that do not end and require a longer-term commitment of one or more people.

In the case of the search team, at least half of the candidates volunteered. The other half were recommended by members of the Church Coordination Team (CCT) and/or other members of the congregation.

Most of the five regular office workers and their two or three substitutes were asked to serve in that role. “This role involves a certain skill set and interest level, but the work could easily be done by others in our church family,” said **Gayle Songer**, volunteer office manager, who is also outreach ministry coordinator for CCT.

So how do church volunteers get involved? In most churches, about 40 percent do a particular task because they were asked. Another 40 percent volunteer and the final 20 percent have filled in for someone, liked it, and continued to participate.

Do you believe a role could fill a void in your life, build relationships with fellow churchgoers, or strengthen your relationship with the Lord? Ask somebody you know who is already involved or contact any of the other leaders listed in the CCT listing on p. 10.



# Member Care Team Offers Many Opportunities to Get Started

While people can plug in to virtually every area of service at FBC Muncie, member care is one place to begin.

**Cheryl Flaherty**, outgoing member care ministry chair, knows the importance of having teams of people to do this work.

“Our meal train participants fill a much-needed role providing meals to households where there has been a hospitalization or an injury that would prevent the family members from preparing them. The people who fix food for them seem happy to help out in this way,” she said.

“Another need is funeral dinners,” said Cheryl. “We provide a meal on the day of an FBC church family’s funeral, allowing their families to gather and fellowship. This is a definite benefit when family members have come a distance to participate in the service and burial. A team who can help create the menu, prepare the meal, and clean up is so important to help make this difficult day a little easier.”

Those aren’t the easiest places to plug in, however, according to Cheryl.

One easy place is to serve as a Sunday morning service greeter. This is something people do in a rotation with others, serving every six to seven weeks.

“While more of our volunteers are women,” said Cheryl, “we have a number of men serving as greeters. There are also increasing numbers of men involved in fixing food for different events as well.

“A member care volunteer job that can be done from home is to be part of the card ministry for shut-ins or for people having birthdays,” she said.

**Emily Anderson**, outgoing worship ministry coordinator, enjoys preparing and delivering fall fruit baskets to shut-ins. “With my work and other roles at church,” said Emily, “this provides a time that I can get out and visit with several shut-ins and brighten their day. Getting out this way brightens my day, too.”



**CHERYL FLAHERTY,  
CCT MEMBER CARE CHAIR**

“Being on CCT has been an important way for me to learn more about the church and the inside workings of our various ministries,” said Cheryl. “CCT members have had good chemistry and have been able to work together well even though a lot of it had to be via Zoom during COVID’s worst days.

“It has provided spiritual growth for me, too, as I have worked harder to focus on who was ill, who had a baby, who needed flowers to brighten their hospital room, and especially, who needed prayers,” said Cheryl.

To explore beginning service in member care’s wide array of opportunities, contact Cheryl Flaherty at [flahertychery678l@yahoo.com](mailto:flahertychery678l@yahoo.com).



***“Being on CCT has been an important way for me to learn more about the church and the inside workings of our various ministries.”***

CHERYL FLAHERTY

## Nominating Committee Helps Fill Church Leadership Spots

The nominating committee at FBC plays an important role in electing people to serve in the leadership roles of the Church Coordination Team (CCT).

**Ella Mae Lemen** has served as chair of the nominating group for fifteen years. Other current members are **Larry Fouch** and **Patti Warner** who replaced her late husband, Gene, on the committee.

“We have to put on our ‘thinking caps’ and our ‘prayer caps’ to operate in this role,” said Ella Mae. “If we have done our jobs well, have found an outstanding person to fill a role, and have asked him or her, there may be hesitation, so we encourage the candidate to pray about it.”

"It is a commitment of time and energy, and we want people to know what they are getting into. If they feel God is leading them to serve, we joyfully accept their willingness and present them in a roster of proposed CCT members for the congregation to consider and elect."

The lay moderator is an important role that the nominating committee has to consider. This person may serve up to three years and operates as the chairperson of the CCT. He moderator also makes certain that the leadership group is operating according to the church constitution.

At FBC, members of the CCT, the clerk, and the treasurer are roles occupied by people who are not on staff but fill important administrative positions. Another role is the financial secretary, who is elected by the congregation. He or she counts money from offerings and other gifts and keeps records of individual giving, but does not serve on the CCT. That position is currently held by **Tom Kistler**.

"We have to look for people who meet the qualifications for ministry coordinators," said Ella Mae. These are outlined in the church constitution and bylaws (<https://fbcuncie.org/constitution/>) on pages 12–15. (The back page of this edition of *The Visitor* contains the full list of current CCT ministry members.)

According to the church bylaws, those qualifications are Commitment, Character, Competency, Chemistry, and Capacity.

"Those five Cs are important," said moderator **James Heimlich**. "First of all, members of the CCT have to be members of the church. They have to be members in good standing, meaning they support the practices of the church and are givers of record. They must be of good character: honest, reliable, and so on," James continued. "They should be competent to do the job and work well with others on the team and with the pastors of the church," he said.



**ELLA MAE LEMEN,  
CCT NOMINATING CHAIR**



**JAMES HEIMLICH,  
CCT MODERATOR**

"And capacity is important because sometimes people want to do what they have been asked but don't have the time and energy to devote."

Ella Mae added, "An important point for each area is that the leader is capable of recruiting, equipping, and leading teams. There is too much work to take on a ministry role in CCT and then try to carry it out by themselves."

"People can be praying for the nominating committee as they fill the roles of several people whose three-year terms on CCT expire at the end of the year," said James.

"We have been involved in leadership roles at the church for many years," said Ella Mae of herself and her husband, **Dan Lemen**, who is church treasurer. "All that started almost fifty years ago when we had one small child and another on the way and attended our first service. **Bill and Barb Eidson** came over a few days later to visit with us and encourage us to come back and be part of the church."

According to Ella Mae, that is a role all of us can play in serving the church: inviting people to come to worship with us and, once they do, becoming part of our church body, encouraging their involvement to serve in various roles. 🏰



## *Bible School Is a Great Success*

"Monumental" Bible school was a monumental success, according to **Michelle Heimlich**, director. "We had forty children come through our doors! A total of \$200 was raised for Christian Ministries of Delaware County, and because we met that goal, I took a pie in the face!"

Michelle also reports that there were more than thirty youth and adult volunteers. There were children and youth from City Hope Fellowship who joined FBC Muncie for Vacation Bible School. "Our leftover crafts and decorations went to Avondale United Methodist and The Bridge Community Church to be used for their combined VBS," Michelle said.



## *Get to Know...*

# LORAIN E GARRETT

When many women in their early twenties were focused on school or job hunting, **Loraine Garrett** was being deployed to Iraq. Her five years on active duty in the Army took her to Iraq twice and led to three years in the Army reserves and eleven years working as a civilian in military-related jobs, mostly near Fort Riley, Kansas, one of the largest military installations in the Army’s system. During that eleven years, Loraine completed an associate’s degree in general studies.

“I enjoyed my time in the Army,” Loraine said, “but I didn’t make a career out of it because I didn’t necessarily want to increase my authority as a part of military career building.”

She returned home to east central Indiana in 2018, where she had grown up in Farmland and attended Monroe Central High School. Today she lives in Winchester with her maternal grandmother so she can help the elderly woman remain in her home.

She works in Muncie at the Delaware County courts as a court assistant recorder and jury bailiff. “When I needed a job, I trusted in the Lord and he opened doors for me. It was that way when I felt led to help in 2001 after 9/11, and he led me to join the Army. I have learned that trusting in him is the way to be a part of what he wants for me.”

Loraine is the youngest of four children. Her sister **Emily Anderson** (who sings in the praise band at FBC) is one of her two sisters. It was Emily who convinced Loraine to observe a rehearsal, and worship arts pastor **Clif Davis** invited her to begin singing in their rotations.

“I didn’t know when I began attending FBC that I’d someday be helping to lead the service,” said Loraine. “I love to sing and enjoyed high school choir, but didn’t know that would become part of my ministry at the church.”

Loraine has also enjoyed other volunteering, such as doing calligraphy for the church and serving on leadership teams for some of the women’s events.

In her spare time, she also enjoys bike riding, working challenging puzzles, and bowling on a bowling league.

“I joined First Baptist Church because it felt like home, and I wanted to be part of the church family. If someone was looking for a church, I would encourage them to come be a part of this friendly, caring congregation. I’d also mention that we have ‘fun’ new pastors!”



That's the old joke about pastors. On Sunday, one knows what a pastor does. What does a pastor do *throughout the week*? When you have two co-pastors, the confusion must double.

And it's not a question just for church members. Pastors must ask themselves: given everything that could demand our attention, what do we prioritize? (This is the issue the apostles were facing in Acts 6, a passage which traditionally is read as the calling of the first deacons.)

To clarify what a week in the life of co-pastors looks like, Kendall and I engaged in a conversation.

**JONATHAN:** Kendall! What *would* you say you do around here?

**KENDALL:** Absolutely nothing. \*laughs\* By that, I mean a little of everything.

**J:** Somewhere between everything and nothing sounds right! Should we break it down, then? Let's start with what only one of us does, and then continue with what work we hold in common.

**K:** Oh yes, things I do that you don't.

First, I've been working with CCT representatives to update FBC's youth and children's ministries. We've been talking about curriculum, the rhythm of our programs, and we're working to improve our communication with students and families through social media and FBC's app.

Second, I love working with **Gayle Songer** on outreach. It lets me put my master's in social work to good use! In August, we worked alongside the city to organize volunteer teams to help with Fire Up DWNTWN. More recently, we've met with some of the church's local partners, like Christian Ministries, to talk about how FBC can better support their work and the community.

Third, I'm starting to work with **Cheryl** on member care. How is our church caring for our most vulnerable members?

How do we make sure no one falls through the cracks? We have some good resources to help organize how we care for folks. But are we using them to our full advantage? Those are the questions we've been asking lately. What about you? What do you do all day?

**J:** That you don't? A few things: I've been learning how to update the website. Wade, the last pastor, was very techy, so it's not a "drag and drop" task. (Fortunately, he's been more than helpful when I've reached out to ask a question.)

Since we do not have an administrative assistant, admin tasks are either taken care of by us or volunteers. We've been trying to streamline some of this. For example, we have set up an iPad and keyboard at the front desk with our calendars on it. I've been training our front desk volunteers—who have been doing a fantastic job learning—how to help people get signed up for home visits or pastors' office hours through a Google appointment scheduler.

And, I've also been thinking a lot about how to help people connect. I'm interested in discipleship and small group ministry. It's been a delight to meet with each of our adult life groups. But how do those visiting get to know what is happening?

So I've been working on a guest booklet and starting scrolling announcements before service, both of which gives an overview of who we are and tons of easy ways to connect.

Finally, I've been planning a time of intentional prayer for us together—once a month on the third Thursday of the month—September through December. This will enable us, as a whole congregation, to listen to God's leading and prompting as we go into the future together. We also do quite a bit together, though—sometimes alternating weeks.

**K:** Right, several things come to mind. Along with **Deena Green**, we've been trading off leading Youth Small Group on Sunday mornings. We've also been working together to plan and lead other youth events, like Second Saturdays and our new Youth Midweek on Thursday nights.

On Monday afternoons, we've been doing home visits together. And we both offer pastor's office hours on Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. Those times of personal pastoral care with folks is something we both value.

And, of course, we alternate preaching every other week.

Now I have a question. What important thing do we do that you sometimes find it hard to do?

**J:** This is going to make me sound like a little bit of a bad pastor, but study and prayer! Those are really important, vital parts of pastoring. If I'm not spending adequate time *with* God, why should anyone care what I'm saying *about* God? We're undershepherds of Christ Jesus; we're not entrepreneurs or inventors of in-demand religious products.



Sometimes I think we're conditioned to think that if it's not immediately "productive," it's not worth it. That can't be further from the truth. The best thing I did before a difficult sermon was go into our "conference room" and pray. But now you've got me ranting. Let's wrap this up by summarizing what we do in one sentence. I'll go first and then give you the final word.

A pastor's job is to be an undershepherd to Christ, our Good Shepherd—to be led in, and therefore lead, a life of prayerful devotion to Jesus. Eugene Peterson said the church is a "colony of heaven in a country of death."

A pastor is a servant of the Lord called to the local congregation and tasked with faithfulness in the main things churches do: proclaiming the Word of God, the Lord's Table and Baptism, and the fellowship of the saints—our life together.

That wasn't one sentence, was it?

**K:** It was . . . not. But neither of us are known for brevity! \*laughs\* OK, the last word: A pastor is a traveling companion who comes alongside others in their faith journey—offering a listening ear, support, discernment, and even challenges—on the road with Jesus.



## *Plans for Youth Ministry Are Rolling Out*

BY DEENA GREEN

"Parents and youth met in early August to begin planning for the new direction of FBC Muncie youth, sixth through twelfth grade.

As the person representing the needs of the youth on the CCT, I am pleased that we have tried a new youth curriculum, Youth Ministry 360. We plan to continue to use this as the primary resource for Youth Small Group on Sunday mornings.

This small-group format—Sunday School—will continue meeting Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. in the FBC youth room.

FBC youth have had the opportunity to participate in a weekly Zoom Bible study led by a former FBC volunteer, Spencer Goodman, who has relocated out of state. This was a great support to our youth during COVID and our interim period. We want to extend our gratitude to Spencer for all of the time and effort he has dedicated to the FBC youth.

Other youth plans and activities have been underway. August 13, the youth met at our pastors' home for a pool party. This new opportunity—Second Saturdays—was created to provide a monthly youth social event. Disc golf, a fall party, a movie night, and a Christmas party are planned for September through December.

A structured youth large group will be hosted regularly by our co-pastors, Jonathan and Kendall. This will meet every Thursday from 6:00–7:30 p.m. at the church. The youth are receiving special communications with the identifier "Brad the Moose," a mascot built with Legos.

As a parent of a youth participant, I am elated to see the new enthusiasm from our kids. We can all be praying for our pastors as they lead our youth ministry and our youth as they grow spiritually.



**DEENA GREEN,  
YOUTH MINISTRIES  
COORDINATOR**



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

## MANY OPTIONS FOR FBC VOLUNTEERING

### SUNDAY SERVICE-RELATED TASKS

- Greeting arriving service attendees
- Running service slides, mixing the soundboard, or operating the livestream equipment
- Playing organ, piano, or other instruments
- Singing in the praise band, singing in choirs, or doing solos
- Leading or helping with children's choir
- Being a ringer in bells ministry
- Reading Scripture or praying
- Leading or helping in Sunday School and children's church
- Working in the nursery or toddler rooms
- Doing coffee or doughnut prep and serving for Sunday mornings

### ADULT & CHILDREN'S OPPORTUNITIES

- Leading or joining a small group
- Leading/facilitating the Facebook Live Wednesday prayer session
- Leading or teaching adult or children's Sunday School classes or Bible school functions
- Chaperoning youth services and events

### OUTREACH

- Praying for the needs of the Muncie community
- Praying for particular nonprofits
- Helping with Riverside Avenue's Friendship Class for mentally challenged adults
- Being a seamstress/ironer in pillowcase ministry
- Preparing meals for Christian Ministries men's sleeping rooms
- Helping downtown development with tasks like the Fire up DWNTWN event
- Providing snacks for IUBMH emergency department

### MISCELLANY

- Serving on the Church Coordination Team (CCT)
- Being a volunteer in the church office
- Preparing and cleaning up at church dinners, family funeral dinners, and special events
- Serving on the Security Team
- Being on teams for "Fresh-Brewed Life" breakfasts or other women's events
- Organizing and serving men's breakfasts or outings
- Making and delivering fall fruit baskets to shut-ins
- Sending cards to shut-ins, people with birthdays, etc.
- Assisting others in visiting shut-ins or people who are hospitalized
- Painting or plastering at the church
- Creating flower arrangements or doing holiday decorating

***"Everybody can be great.  
Because anybody can  
serve... You only need  
a heart full of grace.  
A soul generated by love."***

***-Martin Luther, King, Jr.***



# Greetings of Appreciation from David and Pat Hinson

*Dr. Hinson served as interim senior pastor from March 2021  
through early July 2022.*

“THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU” is said three times for a reason. Thank you first for your love. Thank you second for your faith. Thank you third for your generosity. All three have impacted our lives, and we are grateful.



I offered you in worship on July 3 a final “Hinson Benison” or “Hinson Blessing,” which will be long remembered in my own memory: “GLORY, HALLELUJAH, AMEN!”

Not only did such words mark Vision 2022 and your reaching its ultimate goal by Mother’s Day 2022, but they marked a new awareness that God will provide his church the resources and means to do his work if one trusts him for all things!

I am excited about the future of First Baptist Church of Muncie. As I have said before, “Love your new pastors, pray for your church leadership daily, and go boldly into the future knowing Christ is by your side.” Thanks for everything!

Blessings always—as you go and be a blessing to others as the People of God!

David and Pat Hinson – 14019 Hickory Ridge Road – Louisville, KY 40245 

## First Baptist Church Leaders as of September 2022

**Co-Pastors**—Jonathan Balmer & Kendall Ellis  
**Worship Arts Pastor**—Dr. Clifton Davis

### Church Coordination Team

Moderator—James Heimlich

### Members

Treasurer—Dan Lemen

Clerk—Julie Kirklin

Worship—Emily Anderson

Property—Joe Songer

Adult Ministries—Molly Flodder

Youth Ministries—Deena Green

Children’s Ministries—Michelle Heimlich

Member Care—Cheryl Flaherty

Outreach—Gayle Songer

At-Large—Larry Fouch

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