FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH MUNCIE // VOLUME 77 // ISSUE 1 // MARCH 2023

THE VISITOR



We Are Sending, Serving, and Building Up the Body of Christ

Discipleship is a word frequently used in churches, but few other places. How often do you think about it? Ephesians 4:11–13 reminds us of Jesus' open invitation to discipling relationships: *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Discipleship involves serving and learning. As an apprentice learns on the job, we learn to live like Christ as we live. In this issue of *The Visitor,* we're exploring the ways that training, calling, and sending people out for works of service builds up the body of Christ: here in Muncie and worldwide.

In This Issue

Meet friends near and far involved in discipleship ministry:

- ***Kaelyn and Alivia: our ministry interns***
- ***James Heimlich: our new ministry resident***
- ***Mayra Giovanetti and Carlos Bonilla: our newest missionary partners***

The Shared Pulpit: Congregational rhythms of discipleship

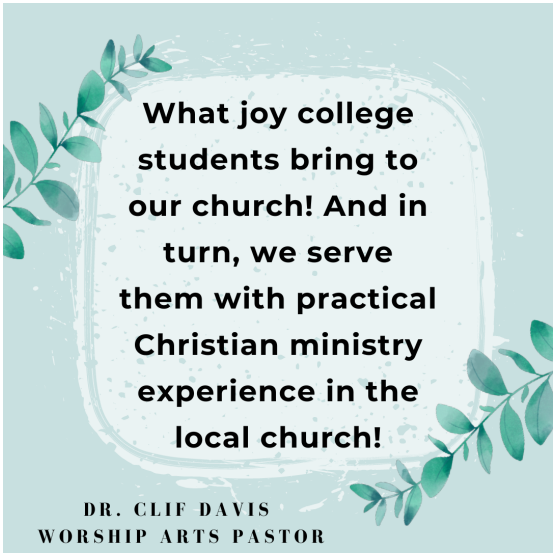
The history of FBC women's ministry 'Circles'

Fellowship and fun:

- ***Women's breakfast***
- ***Vacation Bible School***
- ***All-church mission trip***

The Internship Program Has Experienced Important Growth

In 2010, First Baptist Church of Muncie received a bequest from Mary Elizabeth Wood, a local teacher and long-time member of the church. She wanted money from her estate to go to education-related purposes at the church. For ten years, that gift funded FBCM's "mentee program" and brought in students from Ball State University and Taylor University to work in children's ministry and worship/music ministry. Students gave their time to these ministries in exchange for mentoring and guidance, as well as tuition reimbursement.



According to **Dan Lemen**, church treasurer, "Eventually—knowing that we wanted to continue this work—we put this cost into our budget. We now fund this practice as an 'interns' line item."

When asked about the benefit of First Baptist Church Muncie internships to the church and to the interns, Worship Arts Pastor **Clif Davis** said, "Each of the fourteen worship interns during my tenure at FBC Muncie have helped us deepen our connection with God. What an honor to walk in this part of the journey together! We look forward to the next steps of what God has in store."

Get to Know . . .

Two interns, both juniors from Taylor University, are serving the worship arts area. **Alivia Henn** and **Kaelyn Klopfenstein** sing with the praise band, and Kaelyn also plays piano and guitar. Alivia has worked with the children's choir since the last academic year, and Kaelyn has been involved with music at First Baptist Church Muncie since last fall's semester began.



Kaelyn leading worship



Alivia teaching the strings trio

Alivia longed for a church in which to work with a children's choir as she had done in her hometown of Kokomo. She was thrilled for the opportunity at First Baptist Church in Muncie.

Clif Davis talked with Kaelyn, an elementary education major, about doing an internship at the church. Both young women grew up in church and are active in singing at Taylor University chapel services, so Kaelyn was also interested in the internship opportunity. She has learned much in her role as an intern, such as working with Clif to plan the services and leading rehearsals with the band. Alivia is the older child in her family and has a younger brother. She also has a miniature schnauzer and loves doing crafts. As a music education major, working with the children's choir provides her practical use of her skills and adds to her learning. She says she also loves the hugs and notes from the kids.

Alivia attends a Pentecostal church. As for her collegiate choice, Taylor University is the place she knows she should be and where she is making lifetime Christian friends.

"Taylor's faculty is very supportive, and the opportunity to be there exposes me to an 'intentional community,'" said Alivia.

CONT ON PAGE 3

CONT FROM PAGE 2

This academic year, Alivia tragically lost her mother very unexpectedly. The support she received at Taylor and also among people in the FBC congregation has meant so much to her.

Kaelyn also has a younger brother. She has no pets but at one time shared custody of a lizard with a friend. She hails from Montgomery (population 792) in southwestern Indiana.

As far as her life in Montgomery goes, a big part of her upbringing was growing up in a Mennonite/Nondenominational church.

Kaelyn has found life at Taylor very different from her life growing up in a small town, but she knows it is where she is supposed to be. “There are such good professors that care about not only our learning but about us as individuals,” said Kaelyn.

When asked if they would change anything about their time at FBCM, both said they would like to get to know the congregation better. “We love when people stop by and say hello but would love to know them better and to have more time to socialize!” said Kaelyn.

Life is pretty hectic for these two interns. When asked how they would relax if they were able to take a break, both their answers involved a beach and sun and *time* to relax! With hiking in the mountains as an additional adventure and the realization none of this may be happening soon, the young ladies are enjoying their junior year at Taylor and being part of the worship and arts ministry at First Baptist Church.

James Heimlich’s Ministry Resident Role Is New for FBC



James Heimlich
Ministry Resident

Preparing for ministry doesn’t happen only in the seminary classroom: it happens right here at First Baptist Muncie. Over the years, First Baptist has supported several students of Northern Seminary. This has been part of a joint effort between the American Baptist Churches of Indiana and Kentucky (our regional denomination) and local churches.

Recognizing that a formal program already exists for undergraduate students who receive scholarships as part of their internships serving and learning at FBCM, the Church Coordination Team (CCT) saw an opportunity to create a similar role for seminary students.

"Be it resolved, that the Church Coordination Team of First Baptist Church establishes the position of Ministry Resident to formally recognize the ministry, and organize the ministerial and educational formation, of the attending student receiving a Northern Seminary scholarship,” reads a resolution passed by the CCT on January 16, 2023.

James Heimlich, as the current recipient of the Northern Seminary scholarship, will serve as the inaugural Ministry Resident. In addition to continuing duties such as teaching the intergenerational Sunday School class and co-leading a life group, James will also serve in organizing outreach opportunities for the congregation and planning a Good Friday service alongside the pastoral staff. He will also seek to foster connections between the church community and our surrounding community.

Ministry Resident Has a Full Plate

In addition to James Heimlich's seminary studies and new role as a Ministry Resident at FBC, his involvement with career, community, and family is hectic enough to leave a person breathless! One new role is his election as president to the Indiana Archeology Council for a two-year term. James has been an archeologist for almost twenty-five years and does cultural resource management in Indiana and the Midwest. In fact, he is considered one of the leading experts in historic dam removals as far away as Connecticut, examining dams and making professional reports about what needs to happen to them.

In the Muncie / Delaware County area he serves as president of Christian Ministries and is operating as chair of the Thomas Park / Avondale Neighborhood Association group, which is beginning to work on the incorporation process.

James is interacting with the office of the American Baptist Churches of Indiana/Kentucky to convene a committee to review current issues relating to Camp Tippy and whether they can be improved.

He has been an American Baptist his whole life, having grown up in the First Baptist Church of Richmond. The Heimlich family joined FBCM ten years ago, and for the past four years he served as moderator of the Church Coordination Team, the governing body of the church.

James's wife is Michelle Heimlich, First Baptist's communications specialist, whom he met in a Ball State University class, Jesus and The Gospels. They have nine children. Boys are Andy, Josh, and Jonah, and the girls are Eliana, Isabel, Danielle, Gabrielle, Ariel, and Elora. The Heimlich kids range in age from seventeen to four. James's mother, Brenda Cox, is also an active member of FBCM.

"I marvel at what James is able to get done," said Emily Anderson, worship ministry leader for the CCT. "His residency is a real benefit to our church, and we are blessed to have someone who can accomplish so much to help in this important role."

Mission Moments

By Pastor Kendall Ellis

Depending on your personality, the best and worst thing about attending a work conference is being in a room full of people you've never met. Pastor Jonathan and I attended the regional meeting for ABC Indiana & Kentucky in October 2022, and it turned out to be for the best: we met **Mayra Giovanetti**.



Carlos Bonilla & Mayra Giovanetti
Global Servants, International Ministries

Mayra and her husband, **Carlos Bonilla**, have been global servants with International Ministries since 2000. The BGs—as they are nicknamed—began serving seminary students in Colombia with UNIBAUTISTA by leading discipleship groups. Teachers at heart, the BGs believe that discipleship outside the classroom is as important for ministry preparation as reading a textbook. It's during these discipleship groups that they "love intentionally (Rom. 12:15) while correctly explaining the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15), knowing God provides the growth (1 Cor. 3:6–9)."

The BGs' discipleship groups are expanding as graduates return to ministry in their home countries. Rev. Margarita Campos was one of their discipleship students, and she became the first ordained female pastor in Chile. A man named Emilio plugged into an online discipleship group during the pandemic, eventually becoming a pastor and convention leader in Spain. Today, the BGs support transformational discipleship groups throughout Colombia, Chile, Spain, and Nicaragua. CONT ON PAGE 5

CONT FROM PAGE 4

Stronger than ever, the BGs feel God's call to be disciples who make disciples. They're grateful for financial partners like FBCM whose support allows them to continue teaching and sending. To keep updated on the BGs and how God is moving through them, you can read their monthly e-newsletter, *Acts and Love in Action* at bit.ly/FBCM-BGs.

FBC Mission Budget Supports Other Ministries

In addition to Mayra Giovanetti and Carlos Bonilla introduced above, FBC supports other missionaries as a part of the annual missions budget. Another recipient is Sally Barrett (Yorktown, IN) who is working in a wellness setting with Greater Europe Missions witnessing for Christ in Brighton, England. In addition, Eric Knodel from Cru is the director of Athletes in Action at Ball State University right here in Muncie. Finally, Matt and Meredith (Songer) Snell work for Cadence International at Fort Drum in northern New York. Cadence is an evangelical mission agency dedicated to reaching the military communities of the United States and the world with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Treasurer Dan Lemen tells us that 10 percent of each year's FBC budget goes to support people and organizations, such as the previously named "missionaries" and local groups like Christian Ministries or Muncie Mission Ministries.



Sally Barrett



Eric and Kristen Knodel



Matt and Meredith Snell and their children Emma, Grace, Jacob, Anna, Chloe, and Caleb



A prayer time at the Cadence International Hospitality House at Fort Drum

SAVE THE DATE

Ladies ages 12 and up are invited to enjoy a hot breakfast, a relaxing time with other ladies, and a short talk from pastor, advocate, special needs mom, and child of God, Marie Wiese.
"Getting to Know Me: Better Late Than Never"

Registration begins March 26. A link will be emailed that day, or you may call the church office at 284-7749 to reserve a spot.



Fresh-Brewed Life

SATURDAY, APRIL 15
10:00 A.M–NOON

Servants Have Experienced the Call of God

THE SHARED PULPIT

BY CO-PASTORS
JONATHAN BALMER & KENDALL ELLIS

Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness. . . . To Titus, my true son in our common faith: . . . The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. (Titus 1:1a, 4a, 5 NIV)

These are the beginning words of Paul to Titus. In the course of his journeys, Paul mentored many, like Timothy and Titus. They would travel with him for a time. Then, often, Paul would leave some of his coworkers behind. As we discussed in the January Bible study, Paul's commission to Titus was to "put in order what was left unfinished" by appointing pastors in every town.

This pattern of living, teaching, and sending is throughout Paul's missionary work in the New Testament. It also reflects the special gifting of First Baptist when we're at our best. Students have come and gone from this place. Pastors, missionaries, and lay servants have experienced the call of God here, been trained in the way of Jesus, and gone off to do the work that remained unfinished.

As a church we recommit ourselves to this rhythm of intentional discipleship. Our hope is that every person who gathers for worship would connect with other believers for ongoing discipling relationships.

That is the purpose of our new rhythm of life group seasons punctuated by times of all-church discipleship. We're in the middle of our spring life group season now and will then take a break for all-church Bible study in May. June 21–24, we will serve alongside American Baptists providing disaster relief in Hazard, Kentucky. From the upcoming women's breakfast to VBS, there are many opportunities for God's service to do his will: in Muncie as it is in heaven.

Volunteers Needed for Children's Work

"I am the church! You are the church! We are the church together." The words of the hymn are true.

To do the work of the church in sharing God with others, many hands are needed! When we work on God's team, none of us are called to sit on the bench (or pew). We are all called to work together.

Michelle Heimlich and the children's ministry team are looking for adults who enjoy working with kids to help out with teaching classes and doing activities with children. In a recent effort, Michelle and Pastor Kendall were able to recruit several volunteers, but the need is still great and nursery care is a part of the need.

Please pray and determine whether you will work with others to contribute to this important ministry.



Save the VBS Dates!

This year's Vacation Bible School is set for **July 23–27**! The VBS theme will be "Stellar: Shine Jesus' Light." The experience will have children aged four through sixth grade going on a cosmic quest where kids have a blast shining Jesus' light in the world!



Women's Mission Circles Gave Long-Term Support to ABC Missions

By Dr. William G. Eidson

Once upon a time at First Baptist Church in Muncie, there were women's circles providing much energy to support the needs of American Baptist missionaries as well as area organizations. Typically the Circles were named for a female missionary serving in such fields as China, Japan, India, Belgian Congo, Thailand, and Ukraine. Overseas donations were sent to the Philippines, India, Puerto Rico, Haiti, other areas of Latin America, and Zaire. Here in the United States, donations were sent most often to Native Americans in Oklahoma.

In particular, items requested and sent included sheets, which were cut into strips, then sewn and rolled. In addition to rolling bandages, another item created was quilt blocks, 5 x 7 inches in size, which would be made into quilts or certain clothing items. In the Philippines, they were even made into dresses for young girls.

Other frequently requested items were medical kits, school kits, bed linens, soap, beads, and paper cups. The Edna Martin Christian Center in Indianapolis was frequently the recipient of financial designations. Locally, the Muncie Mission was a favored recipient. The Circles made cookies for Vacation Bible School—as many as twenty-two dozen one time. They cleaned the church kitchen, bought and polished silverware, and stepped up to meet other needs.

Each year they provided a scholarship to a student who attended a school in Indiana, such as Taylor University, Ball State University, Indiana State University, and Franklin College.

Current FBC member **Nina Oisten** became very active in Circles in the '60s. Her most pleasant memories of all that work was the opportunity to meet missionaries. "Supporting missionaries, meeting and getting to know them was so import-ant to me and all of us," she said.

The mid-century participation in Circles was widespread. For example, in 1959 there were nine Circles at FBC. As the years passed and more and more women worked outside the home, interest in Circles gradually decreased. According to Nina, COVID-19 and the shutdown of the church brought about the end of this important work, and the last Circle closed its bank account. Over the years, the women spent thousands of dollars on missions, ranging from money to Thailand to donations to migrant workers.

Our gratitude to literally hundreds of area women for their tireless work and ongoing dedication is deep.



Each Sunday in March you may provide your annual gift to America for Christ in the envelopes near the offering box.

With donations from churches all across America, the American Baptist Home Mission societies have supported communities distressed by the devastation of COVID-19 across the United States and in Puerto Rico. They also helped families who lost homes to floods, wildfires, and such. In addition the money has been given to seminarians preparing to devote their lives to sharing the Good News.








FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH LEADERS

as of March 2023

Co-Senior Pastors–Kendall Ellis and Jonathan Balmer

Worship Arts Pastor–Dr. Clifton Davis

New members of the Church Coordination Team (CCT) pictured from left to right above include:

Moderator–Doug Gregg

Property–Larry Bradburn

Adult Ministries–Carolyn Harke

Youth Ministries–Loraine Garrett

Member Care–Debbie Gregg

Outreach–MaryAnne Bayer

Continuing Leaders:

Treasurer–Dan Lemen

Clerk–Julie Kirklin

Worship–Emily Anderson

Children's Ministry–Michelle Heimlich

At Large–Larry Fouch

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