

THE BANNER Letter

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MIDLAND, TEXAS

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Dear Beloved First family,

Grace and Peace in Christ our Lord today. What a joy it was to be back together on Sunday! Thanks for your wonderful loving and gracious spirit! I was overwhelmed at the energy we felt Sunday and I praise the Lord for it! We learned much about how life needs to change in this new day of church life and we'll get better as we go. Thanks for your patience and love for us.

MASKS AT FBC AND IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

One question we got this past Sunday was about masks in Sunday School. While it would certainly be our preference you wear them everywhere in our facility, if you're going to remove them in class, that's a decision you can make. I don't want our staff or our gatekeepers to be "mask police" trying to enforce masks. That's not our Kingdom calling nor is it the Gospel mandate we've been given.

If you're opposed to wearing masks in general, there's no church official who will harass you about it. While we would prefer that you wear one, there's no reason to break fellowship with other believers or the church over an issue such as this. Simply put, masks don't represent an eternal issue. While the politics of wearing a mask or not can be debated, the church shouldn't be the battleground for that discussion. Our focus is on Christ, Him crucified, loving people and making disciples.

So what do we do when we disagree? Using Matthew 18 as our guiding principle, we begin with an emphasis of our love for Christ and for each other first. Being Christlike is better than being "right." Next, we discuss it with the person we have an issue with. We don't discuss it with our friends or post about it on Facebook to prove our own right-ness. Third, we seek

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unity in Christ not unity of opinion. There are differences of opinion and that's a part of what makes life wonderful. But our differences shouldn't drive us apart. If they do, we need to guard against worshipping those differences instead of the God who called us to unity in Christ (John 17). Finally, realize that even when we aren't on the same "page" about a particular issue, our love for Christ ought to be the driving factor for how we approach others whom Christ loves. Let your words be seasoned with grace and kindness (Ephesians 4:29-30), not moral rage and self-indignation. Our eternity is linked together in Christ – let's practice living like Heaven now.

KATY LITTLE BEGINS HER NEW ROLE!

As of August 3rd, our friend Katy Little has launched her new role as Associate Minister to Senior Adults and Women's Ministry! She's downstairs now (just in case you're looking for her!) and off to a strong start. Please pray for these days of transition for her!

VALET PARKING

Until further notice, we aren't going to be offering Valet parking. There's just no way to protect the First family well AND provide

that service. With God's good graces, we'll be able to resume it soon, but not at this time.

DESERT STREAMS

These days are lonely and challenging for all of us. That's why we launched "Desert Streams." It's a daily reminder that we are most definitely NOT alone. Each day at 9 AM on our Facebook page, we post a 5-10 minute video devotional intent on encouraging, uplifting, discipling and loving people. We drew the name from Isaiah 43:19: "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert." Desert streams – an oxymoron if ever there was one. How can you find streams in the desert? You can when God brings the water to you. I hope you'll join us at 9 AM weekday mornings for a drink from a desert stream. [Facebook.com/FBCMIdland](https://www.facebook.com/FBCMIdland)

CHRISTIAN COTTON

Finally, a special word of gratitude is due to our friend Christian Cotton. Our friend Christian spent the summer interning with me as a part of his seminary preparation for serving in Christian ministry. While this summer (and year!) has been anything but normal, Christian served well. As he was preparing to return to Southern Seminary for his last year I said to him, "I've either scared you out of ministry or confirmed this is right for you. If you can survive these crazy days, normal life will seem simple!" He has a rich future ahead and I'm glad to see it coming. Pray for him, his wife Megan, their son Wyatt and their daughter Annie as they complete their seminary training and begin a new chapter in life.

Committed to Christ and His people,
Darin

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

August 9, 2020

Offering	Monthly	Year to Date
First Baptist.....	\$ 160,857	\$ 7,331,430
Budget Requirement.....	\$ 135,000	\$ 6,712,082
Over/Under Budget.....	\$ 25,857	\$ 619,345
Hope 1:8.....	\$ 505	\$ 22,248

WEEKLY COUNT

August 9, 2020

Sunday School Groups	Attendance
Adults.....	452
Preschool, Children, & Students.....	209
Online Programing	
Live Views	428

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