

FIRST *Connections*

The Monthly Magazine of Nashville First Baptist Church



2019 THE YEAR OF SPIRITUAL

AWAKENING

January 2019



Frank and to the Point

Dr. Frank R. Lewis, senior pastor



Happy New Year, Church Family! God, in His grace and mercy, has met us with the hopeful prospect of 365 days of steadfast love and mercy (Lamentations 3:22-23). We welcome this kind of new beginning.

One of the things I love about a new beginning is the opportunity it gives us to get things right in the coming year. We resolve to get in shape, eat better, be nicer, love deeper, post kinder, tweet less. Some of those things we will do—for a while.

I want more than that. My prayer for 2019 is that a *Spiritual Awakening* takes place. I need it in my life, I see the need for it in the lives of others, and I know that we need it as a church. I hope that you will join me in a daily prayer for *Spiritual Awakening* to be experienced in our church, in our homes, and throughout our city.

John Piper says, “Revival is the sovereign work of God to awaken His people with fresh intensity to the truth and glory of God, the ugliness of sin, the horror of hell, the preciousness of Christ’s atoning work, the wonder of salvation by grace through faith, the urgency of holiness and witness, and the sweetness of worship with God’s people. Revival is what happens when the sovereign Spirit wills to blow on large numbers at one time (John 3:8).”

Several things in Piper’s words resonate with me. First, revival, or spiritual awakening, is the work of God. We cannot manipulate it, manufacture it, plan it, or make it happen. Only God can make the wind of revival blow. He is sovereign. He is in control.

Second, when revival, or spiritual awakening, happens, there is a new intensity about everything in life that really matters. Our priorities will change, not by our arrangement, but by arrangement of the Holy Spirit. If the Spirit of God lights a fire of holy intensity in our hearts, we won’t dare misplace His priorities for lesser things. We’ve let the minors become the majors, and the majors become the minors. Revival winds reorder those things properly. That’s the kind of awakening I long to see.

Finally, wouldn’t it be an amazing experience to see the wind of revival blow on our church as a whole, or as Piper says, “on large numbers at one time?” That’s harder for me to imagine today than ever before because we are rarely all together as a large group. Multiple services and multiple demands on everyone’s time allow only a small portion of our church body to be together on any one Sunday. And, what if the Sunday the Spirit’s wind blew was the same Sunday you had business out of town? Wouldn’t that be horrible!

2019 could be the year of *Spiritual Awakening*. I’m going to “set my sails” so they can catch the Spirit’s Wind should God providentially and sovereignly start to blow.

I hope you’ll join me.

¹ John Piper, *A Godward Life: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All Life* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 1997), 111.

Introducing Our Newly-Elected Deacon Officers



Congratulations to this outstanding group of leaders!

Pictured L to R: Chairman Tom Clark; Secretary Kelly Porch; Assistant Secretary Fran Hoogstraat; Vice-Chairman Susie Roberson

Welcome to Our New Member!



Thomas Beauregard
(Beau) Jones

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays

- 5: Wesley Lankford
- 9: Shannon Meadors
- 16: Angie Poore

Anniversaries

- 1: Wesley Lankford (1995)
- 1: Tony Rankin (2017)
- 4: Angie Poore (2000)
- 6: Jason Cox (2014)

United by Christ

A Christmas Parade Shared With Our Friends at First Baptist, Capitol Hill

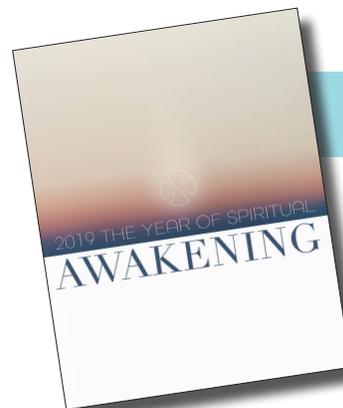


We Make It Easy to Give

For your ease, whether in town or out of town, you can contribute to the Lord's Work through Nashville First Baptist Church:

- Give online with your smart phone: NashvilleFirst.org.
- Schedule an electronic contribution as frequently as you like using bank draft.
- Mail a check, or place it in your Bible study or worship offering.
- Contribute cash in your own sealed envelope.

On the Cover



This year, Nashville First Baptist has a theme: "2019, the Year of Spiritual Awakening."

Refugees Revived

Why should we care about a refugee's pilgrimage? There might be as many answers to that question as there are Baptists under our steeple. You might be inclined to care on the basis of scriptural mandates, the call of the Holy Spirit in our community, or to release some of the burden privilege imposes. Nashville is changing, and many are Responding to those in need. Hear their stories:

by Kelly Moreland Jones

Hay Blu and Mu's Story

Just down the road from Tusculum Hills, you'll find the Nashville International Center for Empowerment (NICE). This non-profit coordinates all logistics involved in receiving and orienting refugees. Imagine the gifts you shower newlyweds with, as they prepare to join households. NICE's refugees are our neighbors. They are setting up households with scarce resources. Hay Blu and Mu are one of NICE's clients.

Yotha Koonoo was just two years old when he arrived in the United States with his father who was selected in a resettlement lottery. Now eight, Koonoo is a bundle of energy, proudly spelling his name and proclaiming his love for freeze tag as his family members look on and smile.

Yotha's mother and father, Hay Blu Hser and Mu Kuu, met at a refugee camp in Thailand after both of their families fled the decades-long conflict in Burma (now referred to as Myanmar). The fighting, which began in 1948 and is still going on today, is known as the world's longest running civil war.

The family has found comfort and a sense of community at All Saints Episcopal Church, whose members helped them become self-sufficient and to secure job interviews. Although they miss their family in Thailand, they do not plan to return until peace is achieved. For now, the family is extremely happy to be together again. They are grateful for safety, freedom, and free public education that the United States affords.



Did you know?

- The Nashville World Outreach Partnership (NWOP) was spearheaded by Tusculum Hills Baptist Church (THBC) in response to a changing neighborhood?
- The ministry supports and serves refugees and immigrants living in South Nashville?
- Nashville First Baptist Church, Forest Hills Baptist Church, and THBC manage the NWOP, and have committed to financially support it for three years?
- All refugees have been fully vetted by Homeland Security? They are here legally and with the blessings of the U.S.

Siloam's Story

Siloam Health was started in the heart of a Belmont Church member and has served a primarily African American population in the Edgehill community since 1991. As community needs changed, they remained flexible and present. In 2003, they became the primary provider of all wellness checks for refugees in the state of Tennessee. Today, they continue to serve the health needs of refugee and immigrant populations, and have recently launched a community-based health education program: "Nashville Neighbors (NN)." Teams of six or more adults are paired with a newly arrived refugee family for six months. A paid interpreter assists with communication as volunteers teach basic health education in a refugee family's home. The focus is to foster relationships and to create a broader social network and support system for refugee families. An NN participant from the Democratic Republic of the Congo says, "I learned a lot of information, but the most important one is 'love.'"

"We celebrate all that has happened in each of these ministries, and look forward to the ways Nashville First Baptist Church members can be a part of God's work... I wonder what story our hearts are being prepared to experience."

We celebrate all that has happened in each of these ministries, and look forward to the ways Nashville First Baptist Church members can be a part of God's work. Nashville World Outreach Partners has had 29 decisions for Christ from Muslims, Buddhists, and agnostics. Nashville International Center for Empowerment began in the 1970s with a commitment to Nashville's Kurdish community. They continue to sustain a reputation of trust within refugee populations. Siloam's Nashville Neighbors project led to a special friendship when a woman being served and a woman serving became pregnant at the same time. I wonder what story our hearts are being prepared to experience.



How to Join the Work

- Pray for God to connect you with the right ministry opportunity. Then, show up.
- Nashville World Outreach Partnership at Tusculum Hills needs volunteers and funds. You can support the six ethnic congregations meeting weekly; teach citizenship or ESL classes; help feed 50-plus children weekly; support the Freedom Choir or International Women's Outreach, or teach Kindergarten readiness. Contact Terry Hudgins, terryh@thbc.com, for more information.
- Nashville International Center for Empowerment needs volunteers and donations. You can facilitate a refugee resettlement in Nashville by driving refugees to appointments, offering them employment, donating household goods, or translating for them. Contact Parvez Mohsin, parvez@empowernashville.org, for more information.
- Siloam has a unique opportunity that is well-suited to a small group or Sunday School class. Contact Wes Harrell, wes.harrell@siloamhealth.org.



Photos by Bob Delevante

A Christmas Miracle on Broadway

by Tony Rankin

During the Christmas Parade, a man fell to the ground following a major heart attack. After six minutes of heart compressions with no pulse, many in the crowd began to give up. I said, “No, we’re in, and we’re not going to quit; the defibrillator is on the way from the church.” Tom Crow alertly stepped into our protocol, returning with the defibrillator. Shock was administered to the man’s chest, and his heart began to beat. He was then transported to Vanderbilt. Many in the crowd said, “the church’s defibrillator saved that guy’s life.”

When I got to Vanderbilt, one of the man’s colleagues was also looking for him. As I took him with me to the critical tower cath lab, I discovered he and the victim were photographers and reporters for The Tennessean. The victim’s name was Wade Payne. I spent some time with Wade’s brother, Rod. He asked why our church got involved. I simply said, “because we love people, and we love God.”

That day was a perfect example of why we do what we do, wherever we are. Consequential strangers—they touch our lives as we interact with them. In turn, we are also greatly

Get to Know First is Now Discover First

New Program for Those Who Want to Know More

The first session is Sunday, January 6, following worship.

Discover First is an opportunity for people to get to know the staff of Nashville First Baptist Church while learning about the Nashville First vision, mission, and ministries. On the first Sunday each month, our ministerial team will gather with guests in the Chapel immediately following worship.

DISCOVER
FIRST



We still need classes/groups/departments to volunteer (providing food and overnight hosting) on March 10, 17, and 24. We also need help with overnight hosting on March 31. If you and/or your group can help, contact Lauryn Moody at Laurynbmoody@gmail.com.

It’s Not Too Late!

To register, go to NashvilleFirst.org/Momentum
Classes run January 6 – March 10
Sundays at 9 a.m. | Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m. | Thursdays at 6 p.m.



Did You Know . . .

- 64% of Americans can’t cover a \$1,000 EMERGENCY?
- The average amount spent on credit card interest is \$2,630 per year?
- 76% of people live paycheck to paycheck?
- The average consumer debt is \$187,187 on mortgages; \$29,575 on Student loans; \$16,917 on auto loans; \$5,100 on credit cards?
- The average American household wastes 24% of their take-home pay on consumer debt?

You’ve Got Mail!

Dozens of Christmas Cards are Waiting for Recipients

By January 16, please stop by the Christmas Post Office, sponsored by the Royal Ambassadors, in the Foyer to check your mailbox.

What, When, Where?

Get A 2019 Church Calendar Copy

The official 2019 Church Calendar is available online at NashvilleFirst.org/Calendarpdf. Physical copies are available on a Foyer table throughout January.

New Year's Day / Church Offices Closed
Tuesday, January 1

No Evening Activities
Wednesday, January 2

The Christmas Post Office
January 1 – January 6
Sanctuary Foyer

Please stop by the post office to check the mailbox by January 16.
Even if you do not choose to send cards through the RA Post Office,
cards may be sent to you!

MOMENTUM Begins!
Sunday, January 6
9:00 a.m.

Learn how to plan, grow, and save!

Discover First
Sunday, January 6
Following Worship

An opportunity for people to get to know our staff while learning
about our vision, mission, and ministries

Youth Choir Resumes
Sunday, January 6
12:15 p.m.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day / Church Offices Closed
Monday, January 21

Souper Bowl Sunday Canned Soup Drive
Sunday, February 3

Did you know one in six adults and one in four children struggle
with hunger every day in Tennessee? SOUPer Bowl Sunday provides
an opportunity for our church to rally together in this fight against
hunger in our community.

On Sunday, February 4, Nashville First Baptist will collect canned
soups and boxes of crackers for our local food bank, Second Harvest.
Last year, Second Harvest distributed more than 29 million pounds
of food to more than 450 partner agencies, providing more than 24
million meals to hungry children, families, and seniors. Together,
our small gifts will make a big difference here in Middle Tennessee.

Contact: Shannon Meadors, Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org



Bible Drill Kick-Off
Sunday, January 6
11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Room 360 | Grades 4 – 6

Bible Drill is a challenging, yet super-fun semester for preteens
in Grades 4 – 6. It is designed to help kids develop skills in order
to navigate, memorize, and apply the Bible to their world. Each
year, preteens memorize 25 Bible verses, 10 key Bible passages,
and learn to locate books of the Bible in less than 10 seconds!
Combined with lunch, large group games, and parties, Bible Drill
is a total thrill! All preteens are invited to the kick-off to learn
more!

Contact: Mary Bunn,
Mary.Bunn@NashvilleFirst.org

DNow 456: Ripple Effect
Friday, February 1 at 6:30 p.m. –
Saturday, February 3 at 1:00 p.m.
Chapel | Cost: \$35, additional sibling or friend: \$25

DNow 456 is a discipleship weekend for preteens in Grades 4 – 6
focused on friendships and growing closer to God. At this year's
DNow 456, preteens will experience worship and Bible study in
the Chapel, sleep over with friends, rock laser tag, and participate
in a service project! Ministers and Bible study leaders will conduct
three interactive Bible studies on choices with the theme verse 1
Timothy 4:12. Parents are invited to a short meeting on Friday
night at 6:45 for a weekend overview. Please register by January
30. The new 2019 Medical Release form is required.

Contact: Shannon Meadors, Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org



SAVE THE DATE!
A Night For Fathers And Daughters Of All Ages
Friday, February 15

Stay Connected To Your Church!

 [Facebook.com/FirstBaptistNashville](https://www.facebook.com/FirstBaptistNashville)

 [Twitter.com/FBCNashville](https://twitter.com/FBCNashville)

 [Instagram.com/NashvilleFirst](https://www.instagram.com/NashvilleFirst)

 [Flickr.com/FirstBaptistNashville](https://www.flickr.com/FirstBaptistNashville)



NASHVILLE
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

108 SEVENTH AVE SOUTH
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

Efforts to Unite in Christ Rewarded



Williamson College recently awarded a \$10,000 scholarship to both Dr. Frank R. Lewis, senior pastor, and Reverend Dr. Kelly Miller Smith Jr., First Baptist, Capitol Hill. Scholarships will be awarded to qualifying students from each church annually (\$2500/year).

The scholarships are in recognition of the two men's "efforts in building understanding across racial boundaries within the body of Christ." David McCall, vice president of advancement, says the evening was a great success. "Pastor Frank and Pastor Kelly were gracious and shared significant insights into their stories, along with the need for biblical unity. They spoke to a full house.

The two pastors swapped pulpits in April. As reported by *The Tennessean* on July 7, 2018,

"What we are doing today matters. What we are doing matters in our city," Lewis said as he stood on his borrowed platform at the historically black First Baptist Church, Capitol Hill. "It matters when God's people join together across different kinds of boundaries and we say, 'You know, it doesn't have to be this way,'" Lewis said in his sermon. "We're going to be together and we're going to lift high the name of Jesus." (Source: Holly Myer, *Nashville Tennessean*, published 10:00 pm CT July 7, 2018)

Both pastors are the catalysts for a new curriculum on biblical unity at Williamson College (WC) in Franklin, TN. This young, liberal arts Christian college is celebrating 20 years. "As devoted followers of Jesus Christ, we have no other option than for the Church to be the Church and demonstrate to a confused world how to truly love one another," says Edward M. Smith, Ph.D., Williamson College president.

Photo courtesy of Baptist Press