



# FIRST *Connections*

The Monthly Magazine of Nashville First Baptist Church

August 2019



# Frank and to the Point

*Dr. Frank R. Lewis, senior pastor*

Dear Church,

Thank you, church, for your prayers, words of encouragement, cards, emails, text messages, and hugs in the hallways following my little cardiac episode in June. I certainly didn't see "that" coming. I was sitting in my doctor's office for a routine follow-up appointment on a Friday afternoon when I was told my heart rate was elevated. That led to a series of conversations which eventually found me sitting in an emergency room at a local hospital. On Monday of that week, I had a couple of procedures and have been resting (sort of) since.

One procedure confirmed that my arteries are like those of a 20-year-old—no blockages, no buildup, no problems! The second procedure reset my heart rhythm, and if the cardiologist is right, he won't be seeing me again. Those are the kind of discharge orders you want to hear. I'm thankful for being in the right place at the right time (which I call providence). I'm grateful for the doctors who treated me and for the Great Physician who saw me through this little scare.

What do you do when you are lying flat on your back in a forced "time out," not knowing what's ahead of you? Well, I did what I've tried to model for you for 22 years now. I prayed. I read Scripture. I prayed some more. Then, I began to think about Scriptures, where God speaks about our hearts. Some of the ones that came to mind are:

**The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? Jeremiah 17:9-10**

**And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. Ezekiel 36:25**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Psalm 51:10**

**Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23**

**My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.**

**Psalm 73:26**

These passages and a few others took on a deeper meaning to me in those few days as a patient. So did the appreciation I already had for members of our ministerial staff who carried the ball in my absence. Tony Rankin stepped in to preach (and visit) in the last minute and for a few weeks after that while I continued to recover. Bill Owen and Alan Lowe (two of our church members with pastoral gifts) covered the times Tony could not. Tom and the rest of our incredible ministry team kept things humming here during a very busy time of mission trips, camps, construction, and unexpected building maintenance. We are a blessed church because of the care we show, the gifted people God has brought here to serve, and the opportunities that only seem to increase with each passing day.

I know there's a lot of stress in your life and mine these days. If I were pastoral with you following a heart episode, I'd probably tell you that your heart was trying to keep up with the speed at which you've been living, so slow down. I'd probably listen to your story and tell you that you're carrying some pressure God didn't intend you to carry, so let it go. No matter what you said, I'd remind you that God loves you, no matter how the enemy may try to convince you otherwise. So, trust that to be true, and rediscover the joy that God intends for you.

**A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones. Proverbs 17:22**

So Glad to Be Your Pastor!





## Youth Choir Mission Tour New York City – 2019

Thank you for your many prayers, words of encouragement, and financial support of our Youth Choir Mission Tour to New York City this summer. Our group of 68 students and sponsors brought home some incredible memories from the life-changing encounters they shared while on Mission for God in The Big Apple. We prayed for the kinds of experiences which could only be explained by the powerful movement of God in our midst. It is without question, God heard our prayers and poured out His incredible blessings on our team as we ministered in His matchless Name.

This outstanding group of students gave so faithfully of themselves to provide ministry and serve in partnership with the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association. They directed us to engage in various inner-city mission projects which included a concert in Queens working directly with the Evangelical Bengali Church (a Bangladesh congregation), servant evangelism projects in Manhattan with the Journey Church, and a neighborhood connection/prayer walk project in Hell's Kitchen with a new church plant. We ministered to the impoverished by serving in two homeless shelters/soup kitchens—The Bowery Mission's Main Campus and Tribeca Campus; and led worship at Calvary Baptist Church in Manhattan, Iglesia Bautista Canaan (a Latino Church in Queens), and Sunny Hills Community Church in Wytheville, Virginia. We also presented concerts on the flight deck of the USS Intrepid and in Thomas Paine Park at Foley Square.

Countless lives were touched by the music, ministry, and mission endeavors in which our students were engaged. We encourage you to visit our mission tour website, [FBCNashvilleYC.com](http://FBCNashvilleYC.com), where we posted daily updates, prayer requests, videos, photographs, and more. Thank you once again for your continued support of our students and the Youth Choir of Nashville First Baptist. Soli Deo Gloria!

**YOUTH CHOIR FALL KICK-OFF RALLY**  
Sunday, September 8, 2019

## Welcome to Our New Members!



Jeremy and Marissa Moore,  
Gentry, Claire and Jackson



Will and Jenni Turner,  
Carrick, Warren, Miles, Elijah,  
and Weslea Kate



Hannah Crews



Jason Cates

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### Happy Birthday!

**August 8:**  
Joe Filtzpatrick

**August 11:**  
Jaqueline Garcia

### Happy Anniversary!

**August 1:**  
Rosa Estevez (2012) – 7 years

**August 24:**  
Laurie Hall (1992) – 27 years



## On the Cover

*Morgan Smith and the 4-year-olds were  
In the Wild this summer at VBS 2019!*



## Save-the-Dates for Our Anniversary!

July 22, 2020, is Nashville First Baptist Church's 200th anniversary! Be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, July 19 – Wednesday, July 22, and Sunday, July 26. Stay tuned for some significant events announced for July 19 and July 22!

# More Than a Conversion Story: Disciples Who Make Disciples

Dewi (De-vee, not her real name) was just a young teen when our Church Resource Ministries (CRM)/Novo (Novo.org) staff members in East Asia first met her. Dewi was a bit quirky, quiet but creative, an artist, and a real thinker. She was reared in a Hindu (the area's majority religion) family.

The staff got to know Dewi when she started coming to the youth center—the base of their ministry—to learn English. Many of the youth came through the center to take a class, grab a cup of tea, or use the indoor skate-park. Not long after Dewi started spending time there, she was in a motorcycle accident. She was in the hospital for a week with a cracked skull.

Once released from the hospital, the CRM staff invited Dewi over to a member home to chat and see how she was doing. They learned Dewi's life-and-death experience had left her unmoved.

As Dewi continued to come to the center, one of the staff there—a national who follows Jesus—began to mentor her. Through this relationship, Dewi's interest in Jesus started to grow.

One day, Dewi didn't feel at peace and decided that she'd try praying in Jesus' name. That was the turning point for her. She wanted to find out what it really meant to be a Jesus follower and how to access that kind of power in her life. What a life-and-death experience couldn't accomplish in Dewi's life, a sense of powerlessness did. She knew she needed something different.

"I love the story of Dewi's journey toward God," a CRM/Novo staff member (who must remain anonymous) shares, "because we see so many people in East Asia go through a similar process. It takes several different encounters where they hear the truth and have a personal experience that makes Jesus real to them. It may be a healing, or praying and feeling something different, or experiencing the power of God in their lives."

"What a life-and-death experience couldn't accomplish in Dewi's life, a sense of powerlessness did. She knew she needed something different."



Dewi started talking to her family about what she believed and why she believed these new things about God. In Dewi's country, there can be enormous consequences for changing religion, including your family disowning you or casting you out of their village. Being wise and contextual in how she shared her faith kept her from losing relationship and influence with her family.

Dewi's family ultimately came to her baptism, even though they were not believers because they wanted to respect her and be part of her journey. As Dewi was baptized, her family was right next to her, giving their offerings to their Hindu gods in the water.

These days, Dewi is leading three or four Discovery Bible Studies in the community, one of which meets in her parents' home. Both of her parents now follow Jesus as well.

**“The only way for us to fulfill our mission is to multiply movements of the gospel and mobilize the church for missions around the world. We empower new believers to share the good news, to become disciples who make disciples—this is the kind of gospel-movement-making-disciple that Dewi has become. We trust that this is only the beginning of the story.”**

Eventually, CRM/Novo staff handed off leadership of the youth center to Dewi so their staff could focus on leading the expanding gospel movement across the country. These teams are working in both Muslim and Hindu areas, looking for people of peace, starting Discovery Bible Studies, and engaging unengaged people groups.



The anonymous CRM/Novo staff person says, “We do what we do so that the Dewi's of the world can discover the peace and power of Jesus for themselves, and come to know and love him. But we don't want to stop there! The only way for us to fulfill our mission is to multiply movements of the gospel and mobilize the church for missions around the world. We empower new believers to share the good news, to become disciples who make disciples—this is the kind of gospel-movement-making-disciple that Dewi has become. We trust that this is only the beginning of the story.”

In 2018, CRM/Novo recorded 31,163 new disciples—disciples who may go on to make more disciples—and 22,350 leaders developed around the world!

*About the anonymous author: This story comes to us from a CRM staff member/missionary we support in East Asia, where the good news is taking root and spreading incognito.*





We have recently converted our church database system to an exciting new tool—REALM. Watch in the days ahead for updates to stay connected with your church, for online giving, and much more.

## Moore Named CDC Director



Marissa Moore is the new Child Development Center (CDC) director here. Her ties to Nashville First go back to her childhood. “I came to know Christ growing up here at NFBC. My parents brought me to church every Sunday and Wednesday, and my teachers poured the love of Christ into me each time we were here,” she says. “I knew that I wanted to follow Him and was baptized as a 10-year-old.”

As a teen, Marissa worked in Parents Day Out and Vacation Bible School. Her mom, Sandra Gentry, became director of the CDC in 1996. “It was at that time that I began working as an afternoon teacher and fell in love with teaching preschoolers,” she says.

Marissa has worked as a center director in Nashville and Tuscaloosa, Ala. She was also the ministry assistant to children and students here at NFBC from 2010 – 2014.

“I love working here because I’m helping meet a need for working parents in the downtown area, and we get to share Jesus with children and their parents every day,” she says. “I feel supported in my role as center director.”

When she’s not working, Marissa enjoys being with her family, playing with her kids, reading, and cooking. Her husband is Jeremy Moore, and their children are Gentry Claire, 7, and Jackson Reed, 4.

**MISSION**  
encounters

**Sundays, September 8 and 15**  
**9:00 a.m. – 12:30 pm**  
**Foyer**

We have invited several of our community missions partners (with whom we are working in connection with our church’s 200th anniversary) and ministries within our church to provide exhibits and information on their work. Don’t miss it!

## Blood Drive



**WHO:** All FBC members and guests, 18-year-olds and over

**WHAT:** American Red Cross Blood Drive

**WHEN:** Wednesday, August 23 | 3:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

**WHERE:** Room 150

**WHY:** In memory of Pete Deere who gave more than 15 gallons of blood (120 units) from 1962 – 1993

Help us reach our goal of 40 units donated.

For more information, contact Ann Loffi, [bamaday@hotmail.com](mailto:bamaday@hotmail.com).

## Deacon Election Begins

As the body of Christ, we begin electing deacons on Sunday, August 18. The scriptural foundation for these servant leaders’ qualifications is found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13:

*Deacons likewise must be serious, not double-tongued, not indulging in much wine, not greedy for money; they must hold fast to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them first be tested; then, if they prove themselves blameless, let them serve as deacons. Women likewise must be serious, not slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be married only once, and let them manage their children and their households well; for those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and great boldness in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

Deacon Election Committee members encourage you to thoughtfully and prayerfully participate in the election process. Vote online at [Nashvillefirst.org/DeaconElection](http://Nashvillefirst.org/DeaconElection), or via paper ballot located in several places around the church. Online voting must be complete by 9:00 p.m., Thursday, September 5. Paper ballots are accepted until the end of worship, September 8.

If you have any questions, contact a Deacon Election Committee member: Jason Shull, Alyssa Goins, Dale Harned, René Holt, Shane Hitchcock, Don King, Bill Carver, Joann Heifner, or Karen McArthur.

We encourage you to give this vital process your prayerful attention.

**Mission Share Night**  
**August 7 | 6:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall**

The summer has been awe-inspiring and a time to see God at work for many. Hear the stories and testimonies from these mission trip groups:

- Dominican Republic
- Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary
- First Mission Trip to Elizabethton, Tennessee
- High School Graduates to Thailand

**Sanctuary Choir Fall Kickoff**  
**August 7 | 7:00 –8:30 p.m.**



**August 11**

Join us for FREE LUNCH at Discover First! It's an opportunity for you to get to know our staff while learning about the Nashville First vision, mission, and ministries. To RSVP, please email [Sarah.Galloway@NashvilleFirst.org](mailto:Sarah.Galloway@NashvilleFirst.org).

**Business Meeting**  
**August 28 | 6:00 p.m. | Fellowship Hall**



**Sixth Grade Graduation Celebration**  
**August 4 | 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. | Room 150**

Our pastors and teachers will recognize and celebrate the graduating sixth grade class on this milestone Sunday. Graduates and their families are invited to stay for lunch following morning worship. Parents, please RSVP by August 1, and include your child's life verse.

Contact: [Mary.Bunn@NashvilleFirst.org](mailto:Mary.Bunn@NashvilleFirst.org)

**First Kids Advancement Day**  
**August 11 | 8:45 a.m. | Nursery Suite Foyer**

First Kids and their families celebrate the start of the new Sunday School year with a pop-in breakfast before going to their new classrooms.

Contact: [Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org](mailto:Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org)

**Back-to-School Blast**  
**August 14 | 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. | Room 370**  
**Kindergarten – Grade 6**

First Kids entering Kindergarten – Sixth Grade will have a back-to-school blast playing Math, Science, Spelling, Geography, Art, and PE games! Students will also pack a sack lunch, create a back-to-school craft, and receive a back-to-school gift. This night of laughs and learning concludes with a time of prayer for the new school year.

**First Grade Bibles**  
**August 18 | 10:30 a.m. | Sanctuary**

August 18 is a milestone Sunday for first graders—Pastor Frank presents all first grade children a Bible during Sanctuary worship. Parents, please RSVP by Monday, August 12, and include your child's life verse.

Contact: [Mary.Bunn@NashvilleFirst.org](mailto:Mary.Bunn@NashvilleFirst.org)

**First Kids Fall Launch**  
**August 21 | 5:30 – 7:15 p.m. | Room 370**  
**Preschool 3 – Grade 6**

First Kids kick off Wednesday nights this fall with a kid-friendly dinner and open house. Come meet your Music and Missions teachers and get a glimpse into Wednesday nights at First Kids!

Contact: [Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org](mailto:Shannon.Meadors@NashvilleFirst.org)



**Seventh Grade Welcome**  
**August 14**

Seventh graders are welcomed as First Students in a special Wednesday night MidWeek.



**Go Canoeing**  
**Saturday, August 24 | Harpeth River | 9:00 a.m. | \$15**

Come join us for a morning of canoeing on the Harpeth River, only a half hour from downtown! The trip is open to women of all ages and skill levels. Our launch time is 9:00 a.m.—we will finish by lunchtime. For more information and to sign up, contact Sonia Brady at [sonia.brad98@gmail.com](mailto:sonia.brad98@gmail.com) on or before Wednesday, August 14.

**Stay Connected to Your Church!**

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Music Arts Campers experienced a fun-filled week exploring the fine arts and discovering *Who, What, When, Where, Why* about a relationship with Jesus Christ.

