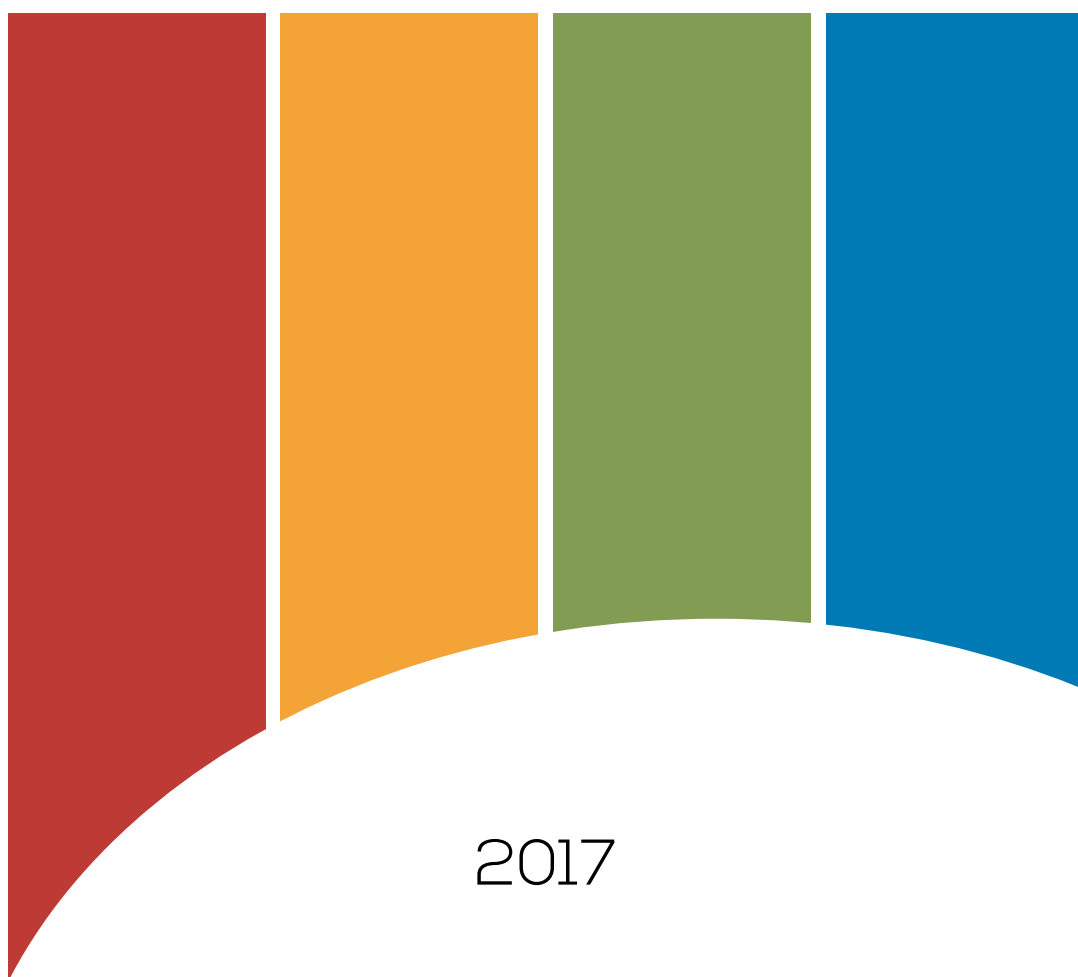
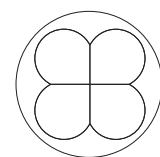




FIRST BAPTIST KNOXVILLE  
**VISION** 472



2017



# VISION 472

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Dear Church Family,

The Bible is filled with passages speaking of God-given dreams and visions that helped God's people know what God planned for them. One passage uniquely speaks to God's call for the Church. In the moments following the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples poured from the Upper Room and began to teach and preach in the languages of all present from across the globe. It was an incredible outpouring of the power of God. As Peter preached and tried to help all of those witnessing this work of God understand it, he drew on the words of one of the prophets:

**This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'** (Acts 2:16-18, NIV)

For the past eight months, a group has been praying, working, and struggling together to help discern how God is at work in our church and where God might be leading us. The group was composed of the current and immediately preceding chair of five councils/committees: Finance – Bob Calloway and Gracie Bishop; Personnel – Mary Ann Dent and Wade Hulsey; Mission – Steve Bowman and Dan Andrews; Long Range Planning – Jim Decker and Alan Tatum; and Deacons – Jim Plemmons and Betty Coley. This group was joined by our ministers: Richard Buerkle, Scott Claybrook, Arthur Clayton, Pam Neal, Tom Ogburn, Susan Tatum, and Ben Winder.

The lay leadership and staff groups first met separately to address big-picture questions. In those meetings we strove to discern what made our church family unique, what defined our church culture, God's purpose in positioning us in this place, and our impact in our community. We talked through challenges that confront us and opportunities ahead.

The groups then came together over five sessions to talk through what they had learned. We sought to hear God speak, dream God's dream for us, and discern God's vision for us. Along the way members of the Visioning Team also reached out to Sunday School classes and engaged people in informal conversations in order to hear how many of you thought God might be directing us. From observations about the church's key commitments to passionate points of future opportunity, the team worked diligently to distill and organize a vision for the future.

THERE IS SURELY A FUTURE HOPE FOR YOU,  
AND YOUR HOPE WILL NOT BE CUT OFF.

 PROVERBS 23:18

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Vision 472 is the product of that process. This booklet will break down the plan in three major areas:

- 4 **Kingdom Values** – These *four* values represent key pathways to expressing our Christian commitment. We believe these Kingdom Values are common values shared by Christians around the world. As a congregation, however, we express them in ways unique to our heritage, culture, and context. We believe any future God has for us will include these values at its core.
- 7 **Congregational Distinctives** – These *seven* distinctives represent recurring places of passion and identity for First Baptist. They serve as places of uniqueness for our congregation. They are distinctive elements – from cultural commitments like the support of women in ministry, to structural commitments like serving as a teaching church – that distinguish us and our sense of place in God’s larger Kingdom work. The visioning team has sensed that the distinctives presented here will remain significant commitments in the future.
- 2 **Horizon Points** – As the name suggests, these *two* points are places some distance ahead of us. Through the work and discernment of this team, there is a growing sense that these points will serve as a guide for our future mission and ministry in Knoxville and around the world.

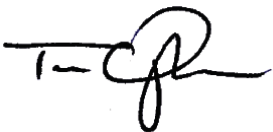
While there is a great degree of information contained in these three sections, you may notice some elements are not long. Part of this process has been the visioning team narrowing the focus of First Baptist’s future ministry. This is not to say we expect to narrow the impact of First Baptist’s future ministry – quite the contrary. By focusing our sense of Kingdom Values, Congregational Distinctives, and Horizon Points our congregation will be able to prepare, equip, and mobilize for the Kingdom work God intends for us.

Embedded within each section of Vision 472 is the acknowledgment that we have been divinely placed in the heart of our city, at the crossroads of its four distinct regional expressions, and on the bounds of a great university. This placement shapes our identity and call. Likewise, the Kingdom call to be disciple-making disciples sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with our community and world lives within the very heart of our church's mission and vision for our future together. Out of our divine placement and sacred call we step into a future hope in Christ Jesus.

We, as a congregation, are fortunate to have deep reservoirs of leadership, heritage, resources, and passion. We are able to do a great deal of ministry, yet we are also but one congregation in the broader Kingdom. We believe, therefore, that our work has been to discern where and how God will use us as a piece in God’s broad, redemptive work.

We are excited to share this vision with you and explore in greater detail how God might use your gifts, resources, and passion to spread the Gospel of Christ. You now hold the culmination of this long journey in your hands. We hope as you read through it, you too might hear the stirring of the Spirit.

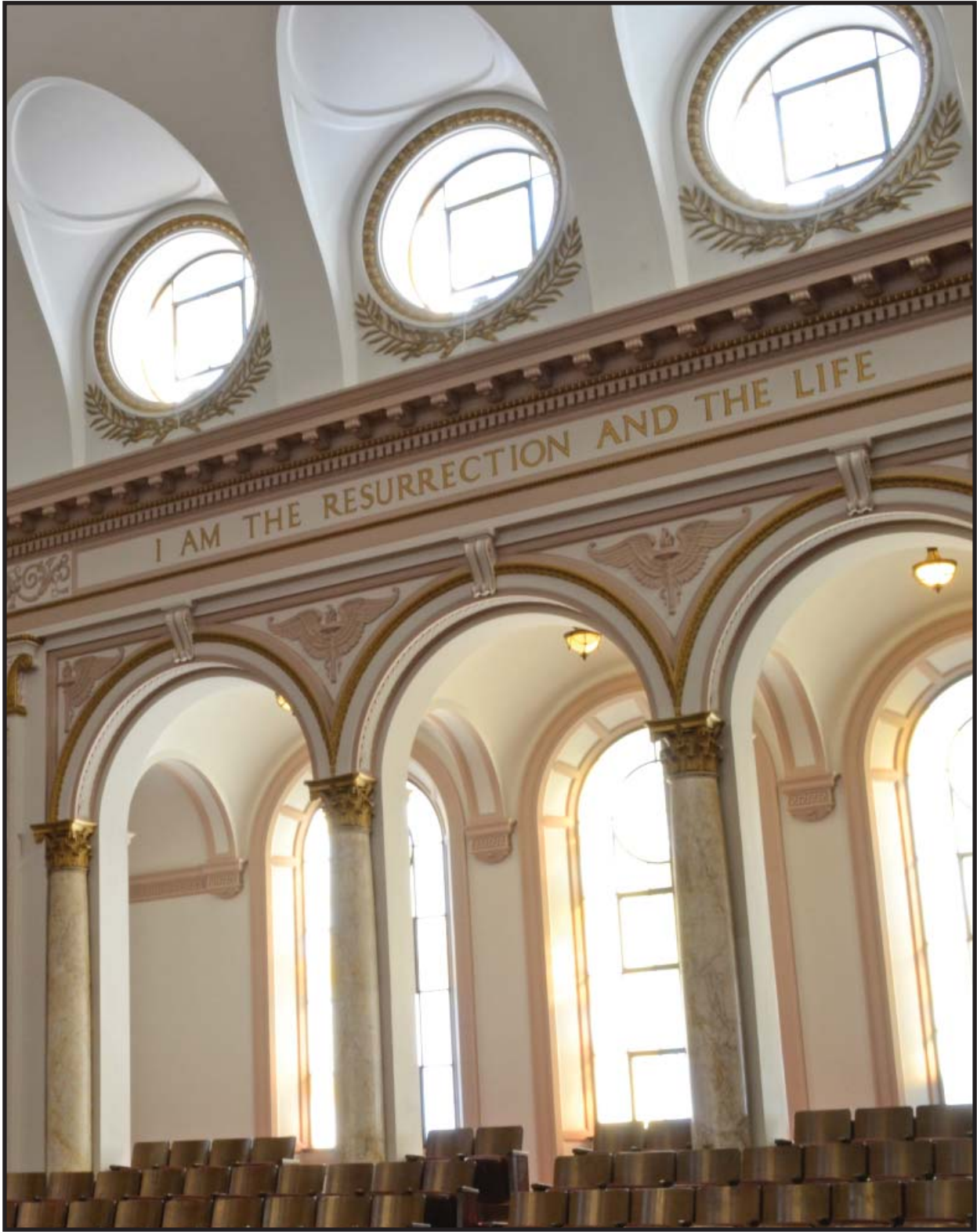
Grace and peace,



Tom Ogburn, Senior Pastor



Betty Coley, Chair of Deacons



# KINGDOM VALUES

FOUR VALUES ESSENTIAL TO LIVING OUT OUR CALL AS A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

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We value meaningful worship in varied styles and venues, expressing our faith through music, drama, scripture reading, prayer, and preaching. We are intentional in our worship services being integral parts, rather than singular events, of our Christian lifestyle.



We value equipping believers to fulfill the Great Commission by meeting others' physical, spiritual, and emotional needs.



We value the purposeful teaching of Biblical truths throughout our faith community so that all may experience continuous growth in their personal relationship with Jesus and are equipped to discern and fulfill God's calling.



We value community that loves one another and respects differing preferences. We seek understanding and affirmation that God works in individuals, families, and the church body.

# CONGREGATIONAL DISTINCTIVES

SEVEN CURRENT, UNIQUE EXPRESSIONS OF CHURCH WE WILL EMBRACE AND EXPAND DURING THE NEXT 36 MONTHS

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## AN INTER-GENERATIONAL CHURCH

We value relationships across our church's wide diversity of ages, which unify us through understanding, respect, support, and ministry. We value people of all ages, engaging with and learning from one another in an inter-generational community of faith.

We envision this leading to:

- Expanded expressions of each Kingdom Value in intentionally inter-generational contexts
- A focus on inter-generational mission and service projects
- Expanded inter-generational discipleship opportunities
- Broadened inter-generational fellowship events
- Inter-generational worship expressions



## AN EGALITARIAN CHURCH

We value both women and men in congregational leadership. We gladly embrace women and men as being equal in the eyes of God and uniquely qualified for congregational leadership – in both membership and ministry.

We envision this leading to:

- Continued, deliberate commitment in selecting both women and men for service in congregational leadership and staff selections
- An intentional fostering of a culture of equality
- Biblical education undergirding this distinctive
- Comprehensive review of church documents to ensure alignment with this distinctive

## A TEACHING CHURCH

We value developing the next generation of women and men who sense God's call to become ministers and missionaries. First Baptist stands committed to creating significant ways to help individuals further develop both their sense of calling and their skill sets for ministry.

We envision this leading to:

- Preparing and sending women and men into vocational ministry
- Expansion of internship opportunities
- Development and funding of a sustainable ministry residency model
- Expanded opportunities for theological education and deliberate ministry experience for those within and outside of our church family



## A THINKING CHURCH

We value the freedom to express differing theological viewpoints in an environment of intellectual openness and tolerance, as we seek God's truth revealed in His word.

We envision this leading to:

- Venues for discourse and instruction on issues of theological importance and complexity
- Creation of healthy settings for discussion and dialogue



## A FAMILY DISCIPLING CHURCH

We value family-focused discipleship, and we choose to come alongside families, enabling them to raise their children to be all God is calling them to become.

We envision this leading to:

- Families equipped to disciple their children
- Implementation of family-focused discipleship models to empower our church and its families



## A RELATIONAL MISSION CHURCH

We value Christ-centered relationships which transform individual lives. We understand successful ministry involves long-term relationships with those beyond our church walls in local, regional, and international communities. We recognize transformed individuals transform neighborhoods in Knoxville and beyond.

We envision this leading to:

- An intentional shift from transactional mission expressions toward purposefully relational ones
- An embrace of a mission strategy which is streamlined and concentrated for enduring relationships

## A PARTNERING CHURCH

We value partnerships and collaborations to provide resources to and enhance the efforts of people and organizations doing God's work.

We envision this leading to:

- Deliberate mission and ministry with people and organizations who share the same heart and focus
- Collaboration with partners in existing community-based ministries
- Consultation with experienced partners as we explore launching new community-based ministries







# HORIZON POINTS

**TWO** EMERGING EXPRESSIONS OF CHURCH WE DISCERN GOD IS CALLING US TO EMBRACE THE NEXT 36 MONTHS

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## A UNIVERSITY CHURCH

We are called to develop and deploy new methods for engaging Knoxville's universities with the Gospel.

We envision this leading to:

- Ministry with university students, faculty, and staff
- Expanded small group discipleship and worship opportunities
- Facilities conducive to a university ministry
- Increased intellectual exchange experiences
- An increase in university students, faculty, and staff actively engaging in missions and ministry



## A REDEMPTIVE CHURCH

We are called to become a congregation committed to redemptive ministries as expressed through marriage ministries; engagement in adoption, foster care and Safe Families ministries; parenting ministries; and other ministries designed to strengthen and restore individuals and families.

We envision this leading to:

- Formation of a ministry plan designed to strengthen and restore marriages and family units
- Partnerships with local agencies in areas such as Safe Families, foster care, and adoption
- Meaningful engagement with individuals and families in crisis
- Expanded resources and aid for those caring for aging loved ones
- Cultivation of efforts to include and engage single adults in ministry



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KNOXVILLE