

SEPTEMBER 30, 2020



Dennis Adams Announces Retirement

On September 1, 1986 I began an incredible journey in ministry at First Baptist Church. It happened to be Labor Day, which meant I began serving FBC by not having to work on my first day. In a similar fashion, I will not have to work on my final day of employment at FBC, which will be December 31, 2020. Let me be clear in saying this decision is the result of lots of praying and family conversations. At no time did anyone even hint that I should retire. COVID-19 and the pandemic have helped make it obvious to me that now is the best time for me to retire. I have learned over the past six months that "free time" is actually a good thing!! Who knew?

To say the past 34 years have been incredible and amazing is an understatement. There have been more blessings than I could ever recount. Other than seven years as a public school teacher, serving FBC has been my career.

While there have been countless special programs, musicals, youth choir tours, Festivals of Music, Singing Christmas Tree, Christmas in the Aire, Easter dramas, Handel's Messiah with the Virginia Symphony Orchestra, Romania yard sales, mission trips to Romania, New York City, Honduras, El Salvador, etc., none of these would have been possible without the faithful commitment and dedication of hundreds if not thousands of volunteers over the years. I have been blessed to serve with some of the most wonderful volunteers in the world! You, the volunteers, have been and continue to be the backbone of the Music Ministry. Of course, many accolades are due all those who served in any capacity in Sanctuary technology over all these years. All of our successes, in large part, are thanks to the (oftentimes) heroic efforts of those responsible for sound, lights, video, PowerPoint, online worship, etc.

I will be forever grateful to the pastors I have worked with over the years, and not once did any pastor force me to limit my service to Music Ministry. On the contrary, it was with the encouragement and support of the pastors of FBC that we were able to establish a partnership with Hungarian Baptists in Hungary and Romania in 1993. Later, in 2000 we began a ministry to Young Singles as well as Hispanics. It was with the blessing of one of my pastors that I was able to teach on the music faculty at CNU for 3.5 years. I have often said that in my initial conversations with each new pastor I have said "you'll never have to motivate me, but you may have to reign me in." From 1986 to

2020, every pastor has been very gracious in allowing me to follow God's leading, whether or not the opportunity was in the Music Ministry.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention just a few of the people who have really had a huge impact on the growth and excellence of the Music Ministry over the years: Ray Boyette, Wendy Buck, Shirley Gratto, Tracy Houston, Betty and Alan Jones, Aline Laufer, Jeanette Lystlund, Judy Means, Mary Merritt, Carol Michalec, Bev Parker, Cecil and June Simpkins, Lesley and Rob Spitzer, Betty Sylvest, Nancy Thomas, Beth Tomassetti, David Wall, Connie Watkins, Julia Williams, and on and on. I am sure that some names have simply not come to mind yet, and I sincerely apologize for that. Please forgive me if your name is not listed.

Thank you First Baptist Family, for allowing me to serve the Lord with you for all these years. I cannot imagine serving anywhere else with any other congregation. To Randy, Walter, Michael, Juan, Susie, Monica, Ethan, Nikki, Sharon and Tamara, thank you for all the time we have served together, and for all the ways you have supported and helped me in whatever I was doing.

To my family, Lynne, Brian, Michael, Courtney, Michelle and LeeAnna, you have seen me at my best and worst, and have always supported and loved me. For that, I will always be grateful and humbled. I love you with all my heart!

What's in store for me after FBC? I have a few ideas, but only the Lord knows what lies ahead. I have been told by many of you who have already retired that retirement was one of your best decisions and experiences. I've been told every day is Saturday and alarm clocks are no longer needed. My four-legged addition to the family is going to see to it that I never oversleep!

I am sad to think that my service here is coming to a close, but I am excited for what the Lord is preparing for me. He knows I am willing to do anything anywhere. "Wherever He leads, I'll go."

God bless you, First Baptist Church, as you work through and finally get past the pandemic. I pray God's best days for First Baptist are just ahead. Please stay in touch, and I will do the same.

Soli Deo Gloria,
Dennis Adams

The Treasure That is Dennis Adams

A few weeks ago, Dennis came to my office and wanted to talk. This has happened often, whether it was standing in my door, standing in the hall, hanging out in his office or in mine. Dennis is one who invites conversation, and I am grateful to have shared many good conversations with him over the past 5 and a half years. This conversation, however, was different. He talked about retirement. He talked about how God had been leading and moving in him for months regarding this decision. As I listened, I noted that he sounded as certain, free and convinced of God's voice as I had ever heard him. We prayed. We laughed. We celebrated. We cried.

Many of you know already, that Dennis is a treasure. In the time I have been the pastor of FBCNN, I have appreciated his incredible musicianship. His solos move me. Our choral anthems touch my soul in a profound way. He has led our church in developing a music program that encompasses a variety of choirs, instrumentalists, and music styles, all which strive for and achieve the highest levels of excellence in church music. In addition, Dennis has taught hundreds of music lessons to the next generation, developing in them a love of music, and inviting them into the love of Jesus. Personally speaking, Dennis is the only voice teacher my daughter has ever had, and he is the leader of a choir and music ministry my wife loves. His musicianship has not only touched our church and community, he has deeply encouraged the musicianship of our family. I am grateful.

As much as I have appreciated Dennis' musical excellence, it is his love for God and people that has impacted me the most. I have watched Dennis love people in the choir, handbells, Swingin' Singers, and throughout our church with deep care and compassion. I have witnessed him love members of our Hispanic community, young adults, and persons from many different backgrounds with a deep and infectious passion. I have travelled with Dennis to Romania and seen firsthand his impact on the lives of persons around the world. Dennis' love for Jesus pours out in his love for people.

There are so many more things I could write about Dennis. The simple truth is, I will miss him at FBCNN. I am glad he will still be in the neighborhood so I can surprise him from time to time!

What happens now? How will our church move forward in this season of musical transition? There is no replacing Dennis Adams and his 34 years of sacrificial service, but we will find a way forward together. First, we will celebrate Dennis between now and November 18, his last day in the office. We will share cards, encouragement, and gratitude with him in every way we can during a pandemic (Walter Satchell may even sing him a song). Our Personnel Team will help us figure out a schedule of celebration, and this information will be communicated in First News.

Second, we will continue pursuing the highest levels of excellence in church music as we worship, even during an interim time. We are blessed to have fantastic musicians on our church staff. We will lean on Wendy Buck, Lesley Spitzer, and Beth Tomassetti for their musical talent and willingness to provide music in worship during these days. We also will lean on the long list of talented volunteer musicians in our church. We will maintain Dennis' work in pursuing excellence in traditional and contemporary worship.

Finally, when the time is right, our Personnel Team will work with our music leadership and staff to figure out our next steps. What will this look like? We do not know, after all, we have not searched for a minister of music in 35 years! However, I am confident in our church leadership and in our music ministry. Most of all, I am confident that the same God who led Dennis here and has now led him to retirement will lead us forward in the ministry of music and worship.

I hope that over these next few weeks, you will join me in celebrating the treasure that is Dennis Adams. I am so glad I have gotten to work on staff with him. Join me in saying to Dennis, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Grace and Peace,

Randy Shepley

LIFE TOGETHER

A Virtual Small Group Investment in Your Spiritual Growth

Starts: Next Wednesday, October 7 @ 7:00 pm

Ends: Wednesday, November 18

It is not too late to sign up for this seven-week study on spiritual community. Copies of the book, *Life Together: A Discussion of Christian Fellowship*, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer are available in the church office for \$10 each. Each group time will begin at 7:00 pm and conclude at 8:15. The meetings will take place on Zoom and include a large group seminar time and a small group time for conversation and prayer. If possible, we will substitute some in-person meeting time for Zoom connections.

Reading the book *Life Together* is part of the small group experience. You are welcome to read the book ahead of time, but there will be a reading plan that will take us through the seven weeks. Coupled with scriptural study, we will learn truths and practices of Christian community and discipleship.

A word of warning:

Life Together is a small book, but Bonhoeffer is a challenging, provocative writer. So, be prepared! As part of our group times, we will cultivate understanding together!

If you are ready to sign up, click on this [Zoom sign up link](#) or contact Nikki Reid in the church office.

I hope you will join us for the soul-deepening experience of *Life Together*.

Weekly Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship and communion in person or online October 4! If you are worshipping online be sure to have your communion elements ready. Communion elements will be available at each service for those worshipping in person. Randy Shepley will be preaching at the 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. worship services. If you have any technical difficulties watching the services on Facebook Live, please send us a direct message on Facebook so we can help troubleshoot the issue.

The following is a list of weekly events that can be accessed on the First Baptist Church of Newport News Facebook page, youth events that can be accessed on their Instagram page-@fbcnnyouth, and young adult events that meet using Microsoft Teams. (The 8:30 and 10:30 Sunday worship services will also be uploaded to the website, fbcnn.org, each Monday, and can be accessed by clicking on the Resources tab.)

- **Sundays:** 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship (*In Person or Facebook Live*)
9:30 a.m. Youth Sunday Bible Study
9:45 a.m. Children's Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship (*In Person or Facebook Live*)
12:30 p.m. Hispanic Worship (*In Person or Facebook Live*)
- **Mondays:** 7:30 p.m. The Bridge Young Adults
- **Tuesdays:** 8:00 p.m. Young Adult Couples

[FBCNN Facebook Live Videos](#)

If you missed Sunday's service and do not have a Facebook account, you can click [here for 8:30](#) or [here for 10:30](#) to watch it on our Vimeo page.

Parking Lot Praise Tonight @ 6 p.m.

FBCNN Youth will be having their third Parking Lot Praise with guest speaker Brian Adams.

Preschool and Children's Sunday School

Preschool and Children's Sunday School will start a new format October 4. We will have live Sunday School sessions each Sunday via Zoom. Grades 1-5 will meet at 9:30 AM and Preschool & Kindergartners will meet at 10 AM. An email will be sent to families with children closer to the start date with Zoom log in information, or you may email Susie swebb@fbcnn.org to get the information. Lessons will still be recorded so families can play them at another time if needed. We look forward to interacting more with the children through these live Sunday School sessions each week beginning October 4.



Every two weeks throughout the Summer and into the Fall, we would like to show support for a locally owned restaurant on or near our mile that has struggled throughout the pandemic. We encourage you to order a meal (eat in or take out) from each restaurant at least once during the two weeks, leave a good tip, and be encouraging and tell them you are from First Baptist. The restaurant for this week is Viny's Pizza and Pasta located on Oyster Point. You can check out their menu and hours on their [website](#). Be sure to click on the Oyster Point location when ordering. The next restaurant for Meals of Blessing will be announced on Sunday!

Prayer Requests

If you have a specific prayer request that you would like the ministerial staff to pray for, you can send it confidentially to prayer@fbcnn.org. This email address is monitored only by the staff of FBCNN. If you have permission from the person and would like them added to the prayer list at church please mention that in your email.

Building Usage

As a reminder, our building is still currently closed due to COVID-19 restrictions. If you need to work on something in the building please check with the Church Office beforehand. We can let you know of the guidelines that are in place and remember that the mandate from Governor Northam requires masks to be worn. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

FBCNN Stewardship Needs

Thank you for your generosity in supporting the mission of FBCNN!

There are several ways to continue to support:

- **Mail your Offering Envelopes:** All funds will go to the General Fund to cover operating expenses like salaries, utilities, etc. unless otherwise designated. We will continue to record your donations for the end of the year contribution statements.
- **Thru Your Bank Online Services:** Call your bank or go to your bank's website and select **Bill Pay**. You will only need the church's address, and you can set the amount and frequency you desire. There is no cost to you or the church.
- **Online Giving:** Go to fbcnn.org and click on the "Resources" tab and then the "Online Giving" tab.
- **Stock Contributions or Charitable Bequests:** If you wish to give stocks or charitable bequests to FBCNN, provide the church's name and address to your broker or lawyer to process the transaction.

If you need more information, please contact Monica Garcia at monica@fbcnn.org or at the Church Office, 930-0911.

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Staff Contact Info

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