



Women Pastors and the Current Conflict in the SBC

Many of you have asked me about the current issues in the Southern Baptist Convention regarding women pastors. Since these are significant events, I want you to be aware of them and how they impact our congregation. This Sunday, as part of our *Favorites* series, I will be preaching on Galatians 3:26-28, one of my favorite passages of scripture and one central to the conversation on who God calls. For now, let me share with you the following points of information.

First, our church partners with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Baptist General Association of Virginia, and the Southern Baptist Convention to engage in mission beyond our Peninsula: Our church budget sends mission monies through the church budget to the BGAV, the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings of the SBC, the CBF Global Missions offering, and to CBF of Virginia. Personally, I have aligned myself solely with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship ever since its founding in 1991, but, in good Baptist fashion, our church budget represents varying church member preferences regarding Baptist partnerships.

Second, the Southern Baptist Convention does not affirm the belief that women can serve as pastors. This is confirmed in Article VI of the *Baptist Faith and Message Statement 2000* which is one reason our church upholds the *Baptist Faith and Message 1963*. Furthermore, many, if not most, Southern Baptist Churches also do not affirm the belief that women can serve as deacons.

Third, in February, the SBC Executive Committee voted to deem five SBC churches “not in friendly cooperation” because they have women pastors.

Four of the churches have senior pastors that are women and one church, Saddleback Church, has a Teaching Pastor that is a woman. These five churches were dismissed as Executive Committee Chairman Jared Wellman said, “. . . [because] we remain committed to upholding the theological convictions of the SBC and maintaining unity among its cooperating churches.” See <https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/saddleback-church-deemed-not-in-friendly-cooperation-with-sbc/>

Fourth, Mike Law, an SBC pastor in Arlington, VA has been advocating for the SBC to add an amendment to the SBC Constitution that would prohibit churches with women pastors from being part of the SBC. To date, over 2,100 pastors, seminary professors, and SBC elders (all male) have signed the letter to the Executive Committee requesting the amendment.

Fifth, to support his call for an SBC constitutional amendment, Mike Law put together a web-based list of 170 women serving as pastors in the SBC. This list is found on Mike’s website in the section entitled *Nashville, We Have a Problem*. He is suggesting the problem is women pastors. It is disturbing that a pastor thinks it’s permissible and unifying to assemble a list of women pastors and churches, with their pictures, Google location of their churches, and in some cases, the names of family members. While all of this information may be public data, its compilation invites shaming, targeting, and heightened vulnerability for these women, churches,

and their families. As you may know, Lesley Spitzer, our Pastor of Worship and Creative Arts, was included in this list along with other churches and women pastors we know.

So, what does this mean for our church family? First, there is no guarantee that this amendment will actually come to the floor at the SBC meeting in June. However, the SBC has been clear since at least 1984 regarding its stand on women pastors. We must admit that the values of the SBC regarding women pastors are not consistent with the values of FBCNN. We call women to serve as pastors and deacons among us. As a church, you have done so long before I was your pastor. We must recognize the truth that the SBC disagrees with our stand on women pastors and deacons and that disagreement may lead them to treat us like the five churches mentioned in my third point above.

Second, the decision to call women pastors and deacons is not an ancillary issue of Biblical interpretation. The Bible is filled with stories of God calling whoever God chooses to call, women and men, to accomplish God's purposes. The truth is, God decides who God calls. God is not limited by our decisions or understanding. In effect, the decision to say that God does not call women to serve as pastors or deacons due to our understanding of scripture is akin to us telling God what God cannot do. God can call whoever God wants to accomplish God's mission.

Third, the decision to call women pastors and women deacons is a local church issue because Baptists are practitioners of local church autonomy. The people of FBCNN, under the leadership of Jesus Christ, determine the direction, staffing, spending, and partnerships of our church family. As Baptists, we partner with denominational groups for mission at our initiative and discretion. We are not supervised by a denominational entity. Therefore, our decisions are not dictated by any denominational group. We make our decisions prayerfully and strategically, under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, we have a lot of conversations happening in our church currently on these issues in leadership groups, deacon's meetings, Sunday morning Bible study classes, and small groups. This kind of healthy conversation is good and very Baptist! I want to offer some more chances for conversation and learning. So, on Wednesdays, April 26 and May 3 at 6:30 pm, I will lead a time of study on Women Pastors, Deacons, and Scripture. We will meet in the sanctuary due to the Citizens Police Academy meeting in Payne Hall. I hope you will join us for what I am sure will be scintillating conversations. Get your questions and thoughts ready! If you have any thoughts or questions before next Wednesday, feel free to send them to me at rshepley@fbcnn.org.

Thank you for being a church that loves good spiritual conversation and for being the kind of church that empowers women pastors and deacons. I am so grateful to be your pastor.

Pastor Randy

Virginia Community Music Festival April 22-23 at Christopher Newport University

Our Sanctuary Choir has the opportunity to perform along with other community music ensembles throughout Virginia at the Virginia Community Music Festival. Their performance will be on Saturday, April 22 at **4:00pm** (please note time correction) in Pope Chapel under the leadership of our Director of Choral Ministry, Dr. John Irving. This festival gives music ensembles the opportunity to perform in a professional setting with wonderful acoustics. It also celebrates and promotes lifelong music making. Admission is free and open to the public. [Click here](#) for more information and for a full schedule of events. Join us as our choir shares their talents with our community!



Join Us as We Worship Together!

There will only be one worship service on Sunday, April 30 at 11am. We will worship together with our Hispanic congregation in a service with aspects from all three Sunday services combined into one. There will be praise songs and hymns in both languages, and Randy Shepley will be preaching with Juan Garcia translating. Sunday Bible Study will be at 9:45am as usual. Immediately after worship the youth will be having a Bake Sale Fundraiser to help raise funds for the youth to go to camp this Summer.



Regular Church Conference Sunday, May 7 at 5pm Payne Fellowship Hall

Come out and listen to what God has been doing in our church over the past few months and will be doing over the months to come! Childcare will be provided but you need to RSVP with Sharon Hertzler, shertzler@fbcnn.org, by May 4.

Upcoming Events

April 19 - No Wednesday Night Bible Study tonight due to Menchville High School band concert at CNU

April 21 - Youth BARF (Bring A Real Friend) Decades Edition at 6:30pm

April 22 - Virginia Community Music Festival at CNU (see article above)



Beta & Delta Circles Event

On Sunday, April 16 at 5pm, members of the Beta and Delta Mission Circles sponsored and served dinner to William and Mary BCM.

April 23 - Vision and Lead Team Meeting after 11am worship service

April 30 - One Combined Worship Service at 11am (see article above)



Weekly Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship in person or online Sunday, April 23 at 8:30am and 11am! Randy Shepley will be leading us in worship. If you have any technical difficulties watching the service 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. Learn more about children's events on Facebook and youth events on their Instagram page-@fbcnnyouth. The 8:30 and 11 Sunday worship services are streamed directly to our [website](#), and can be accessed by clicking on Sermon Library in the Resources tab.

Sundays


- 8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
- 9:45 a.m. Adult Bible Study
- 9:45 a.m. Children's Bible Study
- 9:45 a.m. Infant-Preschool Bible Study
- 9:45 a.m. Youth Bible Study
- 11:00 a.m. Contemporary Worship
- 11:00 a.m. Extended Session - infants through age 4

Download Our App

Stay connected with your church family!

Download Now

Available on the Apple, Android, Amazon, and Roku App Stores



You can download our app on your phone, smart TV or Roku player. This will give you the opportunity to get push notifications (notifications that pop up on your phone) that will allow you to stay informed. In the event of bad weather, we will be able to notify everyone if we need to make changes to our Sunday morning services and Bible Study or Wednesday night activities. You can also watch past and present services, see upcoming events, and more. If you need assistance in downloading the app contact Ethan or a member of our Tech Team for help.

Make a financial contribution to FBCNN today by clicking on the Donate link.

DONATE

12:30 p.m. Hispanic Worship

Mondays

7:00 p.m. Young Single Adults

Wednesdays

5:30 p.m. Midweek Café

6:00 p.m. Handbell Rehearsal

6:30 p.m. Adult Spiritual Formation Group

6:30 p.m. Youth Group Gathering and Worship

6:30 p.m. Children's Kmotion (Music, Missions, and Fun!)

7:30 p.m. Adult Choir Rehearsal

Thursdays

10:00 a.m. Swingin' Singers

Thanks to our FBCNN app, we are able to stream our services directly to our website! Click on the link below to watch the service from 8:30 and 11 this past Sunday. (Services are listed in chronological order with the most recent at the top.)

[April 16](#)

WAYS TO GIVE FINANCIALLY



IN PERSON



MOBILE APP



ONLINE



MAIL OR AUTOMATED
BANK DRAFT

- **Stock contributions:** If you wish to give stocks to First Baptist Church, please give the church's name to your broker to process the transaction. If you need more information, please contact Monica Garcia at monica@fbcnn.org or at the church office number.
- **Required Minimum Distributions (RMD):** If you are 70½ or older and have an IRA (Individual Retirement Account), you can make your Charitable Contribution to the Church via your Broker/Banker. The RMD must come directly to the Church from your Broker/Banker. Please contact your Broker/Banker for this option.

"Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." Psalm 37:4

Staff Contact Info

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