

First Baptist Church Forest Park

The Next 150 Years

On Sunday, August 20th, the majority of our church family voted for “*Change*” with the goal of “relaunching” our church on January 7, 2024. This *Change* is prompted by a desire to be more faithful to Jesus' command to “make disciples.” The rapid pace of this change is necessary due to the limited time in which we can continue to support the financial demands of FBC Forest Park as a small church body in a large building. To more faithfully steward God's resources and to make disciples in Forest Park, we the Leadership Team (the deacons, trustees, and ministerial staff of First Baptist Church Forest Park), after prayerful discussion and consideration, unanimously believe the best way forward is the path of *Change*. This path will require tremendous faith and obedience to God's leadership from our entire church family.

At this point, we cannot fully articulate what “change” will encompass. However, we see change not only as revamping the methods and aesthetics of our church but, primarily, as equipping our congregation to be more effective in outreach to the various generations and cultures in our community. In stating that, we are not moving from 634 Main Street nor are we changing denominations. To put it simply, we desire to “make disciples” to the best of our ability. This is the Biblical mission of the church, and we faithfully expect God to honor our obedience.

We do recognize that many in our church family do not share this same desire to change -- especially at the pace we believe will be required to be effective. It is not the intent of the Leadership Team to ignore or neglect this beloved part of our church family. Nor is it our desire to abandon our rich 150-year history. To clarify, “change” does not mean the death of First Baptist Church Forest Park. To the contrary, we believe the proper approach to change will revitalize the ministries and outreach of the church and lead us back to our mission of making disciples and developing Christian leaders for the next generations. Therefore, it is our prayer, as we take the next steps in faith, that everyone in our church family be involved in prayer and the upcoming opportunities to dream, draft, and implement the changes God is leading us to.

As a church, from this day on into the coming months, we will dream together, draft plans together, and prepare for a Grand Reopening on January 7, 2024. This process begins with you! We are asking our entire church family to prayerfully consider what it means to “make disciples” and provide thoughtful and creative ideas on how we can faithfully follow God to fulfill His mission. After your ideas are submitted, the leaders of the various ministry areas of our church will be asked to submit the strategies that best achieve the mission of making disciples. Those plans and ideas will go before the Leadership Team and a cohesive plan will be clearly articulated as we approach our Grand Reopening on January 7th, 2024.

The Leadership Team intends to communicate that we unanimously believe *Change* is the best way forward in an effort to align the resources of FBC Forest Park to the mission God has given us. This is not change for the sake of change. Nor is it change based on individual preference. In pursuing change, we are modifying our current methods and aesthetics to step into a greater faithfulness to the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20 in Forest Park. Our vision for First Baptist Church Forest Park from January 7, 2024 and beyond is to see God powerfully work through the faithfulness of our members as He has done through our 150-year history.

Please be in prayer for harmony and unity as we follow God as a church family. May First Baptist Church Forest Park’s future reflect our heart to follow the Lord’s command to share the Gospel and make disciples!

The Leadership Team of First Baptist Church Forest Park

Elliott Yancey (Pastor)
Ron Dodson (Trustee)
Bruce Wells (Trustee)
Allen Stephens (Chairman of the Deacons)
Wally Brim (Deacon)
Marvin Panlilio (Deacon)
Mike Rogers (Deacon)
Cary Thompson (Deacon)
Serge Vilmar (Minister to Students)
Malachi Panlilio (Worship Leader)