First Baptist Church Decatur

Mission

This church exists to:
- Know and love God
- Befriend people who feel disconnected from God
- Grow up believers into mature followers of Christ
- Serve Decatur and the world in the way of Jesus.

Description

This congregation celebrated 150 years of ministry in 2012.
We have a lot of space inside and outside our buildings that we try to use for the benefit of the community.
People dress comfortably at both worship services: 8:45 a.m. alternative worship and 11:15 a.m. traditional worship.
We emphasize the study of Scripture, not so that people can construct lists of rules, but so that we can all find our individual stories within the overarching story of God and God's relationship with humankind and all of creation.
We are "baptist" in that we baptize believers who confess their faith in Christ, though we welcome everyone and see all Christians as the corporate body of Christ with us.
Our polity is congregational.
Leadership here is based on giftedness, not on gender, money, or amount of time in the congregation.

Unique Opportunities in Ministry

Entrepreneurial outreach ventures
Systematic welcoming/incorporation ministry for newcomers
Partnership with Crime Victims Advocacy Council
Transportation for job-seekers
Annual "yard sale" for the community
Seasonal opportunities: "Blue Christmas" for those grieving during the holidays
Labyrinth prayer walk during Holy Week, MLK, Jr. weekend of service
"Prayers and Squares" pray ministry involving quilts

Site Details

Outreach
Partnership with Decatur Cooperative Ministry and Decatur-area Emergency Assistance Ministry
Decatur Farmers' Market - Wednesdays on church front lawn
Georgia Center for the Book authors readings and book-signings
Annual Decatur Book Festival venue
Faith and Justice discussion and advocacy group
Ongoing partnerships with ministries in Liberia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Thailand
Worship space for:
  Holy Trinity Ethiopian Orthodox Church
Matupi Christian Baptist Church
Zatong Chin Baptist Church
All day year-round pre-school ages 3 months - 4 years
Summer camp and after-school program for children grades 1-5

Meeting the Five Areas of Ministry

Administration:
Con Ed students are welcome at all staff meetings, finance and deacons' meetings. They are required to attend the August staff retreat. Our operations manager gives one-on-one orientation to church administration.

Liturgy (Worship and Preaching):
Students participate in liturgy planning meetings. They read Scripture, pray, lead responsive readings and assist the Pastor for Children and Families with helping the children in their worship roles. Students who have musical ability lead in that way.
Students always have as many opportunities as they want to preach in various retirement center vespers services. Some students preach in FBCD worship at the discretion of the pastor.

Mission and Outreach:
Students participate in mission planning with the Missions Steering Team and are encouraged to plan, recruit volunteers for and lead special projects during their time here. They can also become part of a regular serving team (homeless shelter, prayer quilts, immigrant ministry, transportation ministry, etc.)

Pastoral Calling and Congregational Care:
Students may, with permission, sit in on marriage counseling sessions, conflict resolution meetings, deacon leadership meetings. They accompany pastors on visits to hospitals and nursing homes and/or make independent visits. They assist with funeral services.

Religious Education:
Every Con Ed student teaches adults, youth, or children once or more during their time here, depending on their interest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denomination</th>
<th>Cooperative Baptist Fellowship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location Type</td>
<td>Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship Attendance</td>
<td>320-350 both services attendance combined</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship Times</td>
<td>8:45 a.m. FreshStart (alternative worship), 11:15 a.m. Sanctuary (traditional worship)</td>
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| **Grief Support Groups.**  
Family meal - Wednesdays 5:30 p.m.  
Worship preparation - Wednesday nights 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
Children's ministry - Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. and Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. |
|---|
| **Stipend?**  
Not usually. Currently our worship leader for the 8:45 service is a Candler student and did his Con Ed II here. But we do not pay students specifically for doing Con Ed II here. |
| **Distance from Candler**  
About 10 minutes by car. |
| **Accessible to persons with disabilities?**  
All three of our buildings are wheel-chair accessible and all floors can be reached by elevator. There are four handicapped-accessible bathrooms. The congregation includes many people who use canes, walkers, and wheelchairs. |
| **Accessible via public transportation?**  
Yes, and bus transportation from Emory is free. |
| **Can women be ordained?**  
Yes |
| **What role do women play in leadership?**  
Our senior pastor and one of our two associate pastors are women. Women are deacons and they chair committees and teams. We usually have a woman chairing the deacons every other year. |

**Contact**  
[www.fbcddecatur.com](http://www.fbcddecatur.com)  
Sharyn Dowd, Pastor for Caring and Serving Ministries  
sdowd@fbcddecatur.com. Senior Pastor Julie Pennington-Russell: joopr@me.com  
fbcd@fbcddecatur.com. DO NOT USE for Con Ed II communication  
308 Clairemont Av  
Decatur, GA 30030  
404-373-1653 - general church phone

**Additional Comments:**  
The following pastors at First Baptist are willing and eligible to mentor students:  
Julie Pennington-Russell - Senior pastor  
Sharyn Dowd - Pastor for Caring and Serving Ministries  
Bob Williamson - Pastor for Senior Adult Ministry  
Dale Doud - Pastor for Children and Families.  
All can be reached at 404-373-1653.