

Church Profile for First Baptist Church of South Hill, VA

The South Hill Baptist Church was formally organized in October 1896 with a wooden church building being erected in 1897. Our church name officially changed to First Baptist Church of South Hill in July 1959. Our church building has been expanded many times, the last two being, first, in February 1981, with the new educational annex, which included 5,550 ft² on two floors that includes a fellowship hall, kitchen, and extra Sunday school classrooms. Our last additions were in 2005 when we built a school building and gymnasium for First Christian School, which was established in 1999. First Christian School currently has students enrolled from Pre-K 3 through fifth grade. First Christian School was a natural expansion of Sonshine Station, our after-school program that began in November 1996.

Since First Baptist Church of South Hill has been around for 124 years, we have had many pastors, with our last senior pastor serving a term of over 18 years before being called to another congregation. The church has a full-time administrative assistant that reports directly to the pastor. All church employees ultimately are overseen by our personnel committee. We also have a part-time music director.

The senior pastor works in conjunction with our Deacon board to handle the business of the church. The Deacon board is currently made up of thirteen members, made up of seven women and six men. Each Deacon serves a term of three years, with a minimum two-year waiting period before serving another term. First Baptist Church has had women serving as Deacons since November 1985. In addition to the senior pastor, our Deacons are also charged with visiting our church members and regular visitors, as well as reaching out to families who are no longer able to attend regular services. The senior pastor and Deacon board make recommendations to the church members for major decisions that affect the membership of the church. Each of these major decisions are voted on at either regular church meetings (annually), or at specially called business meetings which must have two weeks' notice given to the congregation.

Our church congregation is made up of a diverse group of individuals and families from many different backgrounds and age groups, all of which fall under the backdrop of a rural community in southside Virginia. While attendance numbers have been down since March 2020, our Sunday attendance for 2019 averaged 78. Our average before March 2020 was 85 and since May has averaged 48, mostly due to people wishing to remain socially distanced.

Our main ministry is First Christian School (FCS), which was established in 1999 as a safe place for students to develop excellence in academics, as well as learn Christian values. The mission of FCS is to provide a structured, high quality education based upon Christian principles and values. We currently offer opportunities for children from three years old through fifth grade. The quality education that our students receive is expanded upon by the many learning opportunities provided by our music teacher, physical education teacher, and art teacher, all of which add to a well-rounded learning experience. FCS is proud to provide a nurturing environment that builds upon the positive experiences that our students receive in their homes. In order to support our children in their endeavor to become productive citizens, our expectations for achievement and behavior is high. FCS's headmistress oversees the operation of the school and reports directly to the school board, not to the senior pastor. The senior pastor is asked to speak during their chapel services, teach a religion class when needed, serve on their school board as a non-voting member, and help keep the church and school engaged with each other.

The Church's Obligation to the Pastor:

1. To respect the office of pastor and to support his ministry for as long as he holds that office to which the church has called him.
2. To guarantee the freedom of the pulpit so that the pastor can preach his convictions in his own manner and style according to the Scripture and as the Spirit of God leads him.
3. To allow the pastor to be himself instead of trying to fit him into some ministerial mold and to expect no more of his family than is expected of any other family in the church.
4. To provide for the pastor's support to the best of the church's ability, and to review annually the pastor's compensation, recognizing the difference between cost of living increases and merit raises, as an evidence of the church's care and concern for his welfare.
5. To recognize that the pastor is human, makes mistakes, and needs forgiveness like everyone else. And because of the limitations of time he cannot fulfill everyone's expectations.
6. In accordance with biblical church discipline, to confer with the pastor about any accusation made against him instead of discussing it in secret, and to refrain from passing judgment upon him until he has had the opportunity to defend himself.