



WHO WE ARE

A PROFILE OF

FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

1135 FIFTH AVENUE

HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA



**Fifth Avenue
Baptist Church**

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Fifth Avenue Baptist Church

Pastoral Search Committee

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OUR HISTORY

In February 1871, Collis P. Huntington chose a quiet cornfield overlooking the Ohio River as the western terminus for his up-and-coming railroad company, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway. One year later, the newly founded City of Huntington was experiencing rapid growth – not only in its population and economic development, but in its journey of faith as well. On October 20, 1872, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church was founded as a small body of believers striving to love God and love others. Today, over 150 years later, we faithfully continue in that calling.

In 1877, four members of the church came together in a chance meeting on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Eighth Street. On that street corner, they made plans that were destined to revitalize their family of faith. With the news that Rev. William P. Walker was interested in coming to Huntington, Elisha Eastman, J. N. Potts, Henry D. Stewart, and Maj. W. S. Downer decided to take action. Eastman opened their impromptu business meeting with a prayer, sat down on the sack of meal that he was carrying home, and declared the meeting in session. Upon a motion by Maj. Downer, the four agreed to issue a call to Mr. Walker to assume charge of the Baptist work in Huntington. A telegram was sent to the West Virginia Baptist Association, then in session in Parkersburg, which said, “Give Walker \$200.00 and send him to Huntington. The life of the cause seems to depend on it.” Walker came, and with him sprang to life Fifth Avenue Baptist Church.

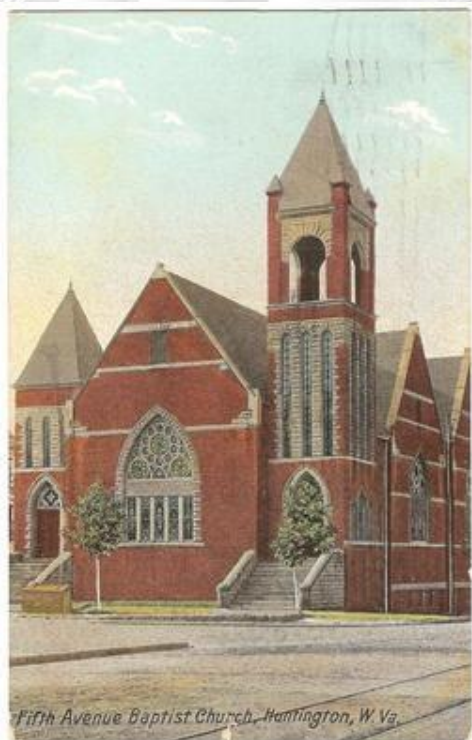


PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES E. CASTO

From 1881-1916, the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church congregation met on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, until even a second building (pictured here in a vintage postcard) was too small to accommodate the growing church.

For nearly a decade after its founding, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church conducted services in various rented spaces throughout Huntington, including Marshall College and a saloon on Third Avenue. In 1881, the congregation purchased a lot on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Tenth Street, where a modest church building was constructed at a cost of \$5,000. Less than 15 years later, the building was replaced with a larger one to accommodate the growing congregation. However, even the second building proved to be too small. In 1916, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church began construction on a new facility just two blocks away, on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street. The church's former building was sold to J. H. Long, who tore it down to build a home for his newspaper, the *Huntington Advertiser*. It was the right fit: Long's building still houses *The Herald-Dispatch*; and on March 2, 1919, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church moved into its new home, where we continue to worship today.

Faithful members and strong leaders have been the cornerstone of our fellowship. In our more than 150-year history, only 11 pastors have led our congregation. As much a part of Huntington as the river and railway on which our city was founded, Fifth Avenue Baptist is a church with a rich history and an exciting future as we have transformed from a downtown church to a community church with a downtown location. ■



OUR LOCATION

Fifth Avenue Baptist Church is situated in downtown Huntington, West Virginia, often described as “the most northern southern city and the most southern northern city.” Situated four blocks from Marshall University, whose enrollment is around 14,000 undergraduate and graduate students, our church has the privilege of ministering to university students, staff, and faculty.

The City of Huntington has a population of 46,025 (Huntington MSA population is 376,155) and is located in the southwestern corner of West Virginia, on the borders of both Ohio and Kentucky. Known locally as “the Tri-State,” the metropolitan area includes the nearby cities of Ironton, Ohio, and Ashland, Kentucky. Huntington, Ironton, and Ashland are referred to as the “River Cities.” A strong manufacturing base has contributed largely to Huntington’s economic development over the years, although new industries continue to emerge. Marshall University remains the city’s largest employer, and its related health care organizations, including St. Mary’s Medical Center and Cabell Huntington Hospital, are also among the top employers. Huntington is a transportation hub, and the river and railways have been a driving force in our city’s growth. Huntington is home to division headquarters for CSX and is the largest inland port in the United States.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
HUNTINGTON QUARTERLY

Huntington is known for its broad, tree-lined streets; attractive homes both historical and contemporary; a friendly, small-town atmosphere; and more than 750 acres of beautiful parkland. Ritter Park is the city’s premier park, located just blocks from downtown Huntington. Its miles of jogging trails, tennis courts, multiple playgrounds, rose garden, amphitheater, and picnic areas are used year-round. Harris Riverfront Park – with breathtaking views of the Ohio River, areas for exercise and play, an interactive nature trail, and an amphitheater – hosts outdoor concerts, annual festivals, and various river activities, as well as a spectacular

fireworks display on Independence Day.

Huntington’s health-conscious side is in full force with bicycle lanes on downtown streets, mountain biking trails, and 5Ks held each weekend throughout the year. The Paul Ambrose Trail for Health (PATH) is a 26-mile bicycle and pedestrian trail system that connects many of Huntington’s workplaces, parks, and other amenities.

Residents of Huntington are deeply rooted in family traditions as well as in giving back to their community. Among the many area projects and agencies supported by Huntingtonians and members of our congregation are Habitat for Humanity, the Huntington City Mission, and Young Life.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
HUNTINGTON QUARTERLY

Marshall University’s beautiful campus is located just blocks from Fifth Avenue Baptist Church. Our congregation is made up of many alumni as well as current students, faculty, and staff.



PHOTO COURTESY OF
HUNTINGTON QUARTERLY

A visit to Huntington would be incomplete without visiting some of the area's finest restaurants, such as Savannah's Restaurant located one block from the church, or without tasting a bit of Huntington's tradition with a visit to Stewart's Original Hotdogs or Jim's Spaghetti House. With the slogan "Shop, Dine, Enjoy," Pullman Square is a popular attraction for visitors and locals alike. Located in the heart of downtown Huntington, Pullman Square offers restaurants, shopping, a paint-your-own-pottery studio, and a movie theater.



PHOTO BY BRIAN BRADLEY

Pullman Square opened in 2009 and continues to expand, welcoming new restaurants, retail stores, and other establishments every year.

In 2019, Huntington was recognized as America's Best Community and was awarded a \$3 million grand prize to support community revitalization projects throughout the city. You can see the creative revitalization and renaissance throughout our wonderful city as much of the city is in a state of reconstruction (new roads, new buildings, and renovations to our beautiful historical architecture and infrastructure). On any given night, 3rd and 4th Avenues bustle with activity at the copious local eateries and gastropubs, live music, and the cultural excitement you'd expect from an All-American College town.

The Huntington Area is seen as a regional hub of business, recreation, healthcare, and economic activity and is home to many amenities that you'd find in larger metropolitan cities. The Huntington Tri-State Airport is served by carriers Allegiant and American Airlines. Marshall Health Network is a first class university affiliated not-for-profit medical system that operates Cabell Huntington Hospital, a 303-bed teaching hospital, St. Mary's Medical Center, a 393-bed teaching hospital, and Hoops Family Children's Hospital, a 72-bed pediatric specialty hospital, all located within the city of Huntington. All are affiliated with the Marshall University Schools of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Nursing.

The area's location on the Ohio River and its many tributaries provides opportunities for water sports and outdoor recreation, and is home to three states' offerings of protected state and national forests. Additionally, Huntington has a nationally renowned Art Museum, its own Symphony Orchestra, and is home to West Virginia's only Smithsonian accredited museum, Heritage Farm Museum. The community is currently completing its first Children's Museum, and in addition to the robust public school programming offered by the area school systems, there are many accredited private Christian parochial schools.

Huntington offers many of the advantages of a larger city – creativity, diversity, excitement, growth – with room to stretch out and relax. The city is true reflection of authentic Appalachian culture, combining a wonderful and unique mix of East Coast sophistication, Midwestern hospitality, and a touch of Southern charm. We're certain all will feel welcome in our distinctive hometown community! ■



OUR MEMBERSHIP

At Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, we are blessed with a congregation of individuals from all walks of life who do not hesitate to share their many talents for the glory of God and to serve His children. Our church membership includes physicians, attorneys, educators, engineers, elected officials, business owners, and other professionals who are leaders in their field as well as in their community.

With many international companies headquartered in Huntington, a thriving university and medical school, and quality hospitals that are constantly expanding to meet our region's health care needs, we have the unique honor of ministering to our city's evolving population base. When a visitor to Huntington enters the doors of our church, it is our privilege to make that person feel at home.

Our church resident membership is made up of 350+ households and our average worship attendance is 175 for formal Sunday services. Our members lead and support our ministries prayerfully, faithfully, and responsibly. The church's budget for 2023 is \$1,218,000.00. ■



PHOTO BY RICK LEE

The six columns of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church symbolize our goals as a family of faith. The two outer columns represent two of the greatest commandments: to love God and to love others. The four inner columns represent the four primary areas of the life of our church: inreach, outreach, spiritual growth, and missions.



OUR ECUMENICAL PARTNERS

With an emphasis on ecumenical partnership and community leadership, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church works with other church congregations and community organizations to serve those in need.

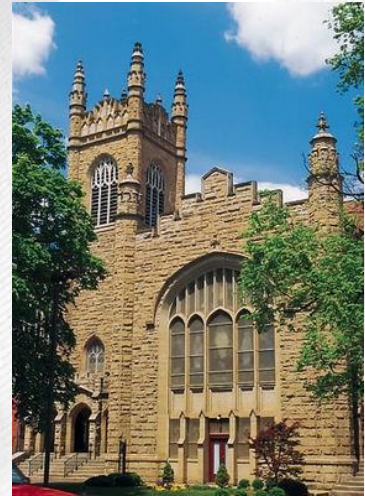
Through our membership in the **DOWNTOWN CHURCHES ASSOCIATION** which includes all of our neighboring churches on Fifth Avenue, we sponsor cooperative ministries in the community, participate in joint worship services, and, every three years, celebrate Holy Communion together in the street on Fifth Avenue. Other churches in the Downtown Churches Association include Central Christian, First United Methodist, Trinity Episcopal, First Presbyterian, Johnson Memorial United Methodist, First Congregational, St. Joseph's Catholic, and First Baptist. Together we support the **CRIDLIN FOOD & CLOTHING PANTRY** located very near FAB on 6th Avenue, not only financially but also in donations of food and clothing. Many of our members volunteer at the pantry each week.

In recent years, our ecumenical efforts have focused on an area of West Huntington known as "Central City." We launched a program called **BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK** at Central City Elementary School, providing schoolchildren who are on the federal Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program with a backpack of food to take home for 38 weekends during the school year. FAB's partnership with Central City Elementary now provides school supplies to needy students, sponsors children during the Christmas Season, and supports Central City teachers with "Teacher Appreciation" snacks twice per month during the school year. We are currently working with other churches and schools in the community to launch church-school partnership programs of their own.



Helpington, an annual day of service organized in 2012, includes community worship, community service projects, and a community lunch fellowship at Central City Elementary School.

Ministries at Marshall University, and residents of the participating neighborhoods who complete projects for downtown social enterprises such as the Cridlin Food & Clothing Pantry, Huntington City Mission, Harmony House, Rebuild, and Recovery Point. The program also supports the homebound members of the downtown partner church congregations. ■



Fifth Avenue is home to many beautiful churches, including First United Methodist Church, located across the street.

In 2012, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church and First Presbyterian Church teamed up for a day of service called **HELPINGTON**, which has since become a large-scale annual event encompassing a wide range of service projects throughout the downtown community. Helpington now includes volunteers from other area churches, students from Baptist Campus



OUR MISSION WORK

Historically, Fifth Avenue Baptist Church has been one of the most generous churches in the American Baptist Churches USA with regard to mission giving. However, our mission focus goes far beyond financial support. With a commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ “beyond the columns,” we regularly participate in mission work around our city, state, country and world.

FAB has led many mission trips, both nationally and internationally, to serve those in need. We have traveled to Mexico and Haiti, aiding in construction work and disaster relief, and national disaster relief efforts have included traveling to Mississippi following Hurricane Katrina and Missouri following the Joplin tornado. We also work in impoverished areas in West Virginia, assisting with disaster relief in our own backyard. In 2002, 112 members of our church traveled to Nicaragua to offer assistance in construction, teaching, and medical care – and what began as a short-term mission trip has blossomed into a lasting relationship with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Since then, more than 20 groups have traveled from FAB to Nicaragua, serving in an orphanage, a nursing home, rural medical clinics, and surrounding neighborhoods. We have established a monthly sponsorship program at the orphanage that first touched our hearts 20 years ago. To build a “mission mindset” in the hearts of our children, we regularly organize family mission trips made up of children, youth, and parents. Our families have served in Washington, D.C.; Weirton, West Virginia; our state Baptist camp in Cowen, West Virginia; and Nicaragua.

Locally, we support numerous organizations in our community that care for the less fortunate. Our **ALMS** (“Aid to Local Ministries”) program is a monthly effort to help meet the needs of local nonprofit organizations. From the city mission to a domestic violence shelter to ministries for college students, the organizations we support are vast and varied. Each month, we work together within our Sunday School classes and as a church to collect items that the organizations have requested. Financial support for these organizations is included in our annual church budget.

In addition to our work internationally, nationally, regionally, and with local organizations, there are several ministries and mission programs that are unique to FAB.

- We have a **GREETING CARD MINISTRY** and **LAY VISITATION MINISTRY** to remind our homebound members and friends that they are prayed for and loved.
- Our **PRAYER SHAWL MINISTRY** knits shawls of comfort and caring. Completed shawls are blessed and given to those who have gone through a serious illness, have lost a loved one, or have experienced other challenges. They are also given in celebration of a new birth, a marriage, high school graduation, and other milestones in life.
- Each December, our **CHRISTMAS FOOD BASKETS** program delivers dozens of baskets of food to families in need throughout Huntington.
- FAB supports the local chapter of **AA** providing snacks and meetings in our Fellowship Hall multiple nights per week.
- We have an ongoing monthly **GAME NIGHT** where we provide mentorship, friendship and dessert treats to residential patients at Recovery Point. ■



OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORSHIP & STUDY

We offer one worship service each Sunday at 10:45 a.m. in our sanctuary. During the summer, June-August, an additional worship service is conducted at 8:15 a.m. in the chapel. Our Sunday evening schedule varies throughout the year and includes meetings for ministry groups, rehearsals for music ensembles, and a wide range of activities for children and youth.

We currently have five adult Sunday School classes. Average adult Sunday School attendance is around 125.

Wednesday Family Night is held September-May. A buffet dinner is offered at 5:15 p.m., followed by activities for youth and children and an adult Bible study coordinated and lead by both the senior minister and various other member teachers within the church congregation. Weekly choir rehearsals, monthly commission meetings, and monthly Church Council meetings are also held on Wednesday evenings. ■



PHOTO BY DONNA EDMONDSON



PHOTO BY BOB HARDWICK



PHOTO BY RICK LEE

➡➡➡ THE LIVING STONES CAMPAIGN

To repair and prepare our building for worship, study, and ministry for generations to come, FAB completed a \$2.3 million capital campaign, titled the Living Stones Campaign. Living Stones projects have included the renovation of our kitchen and fellowship hall, updates to our HVAC system, the installation of new windows, the removal of asbestos, a new sprinkler system, a new cooling tower, new vehicles, masonry repairs, and new roofing. We have updated our ceilings, flooring, and electrical work and have installed church-wide WiFi. To make our building more accessible, we have installed an ADA-compliant restroom near our sanctuary. We have also repaired our gutters and downspouts and completed numerous painting and repair projects throughout the church. To complete these projects, our congregation

gave faithfully and generously, above their regular tithes and offerings, during a three-year period from 2012-2015. The Living Stones Campaign continues as an annual fund drive in the Spring of each year to support the ongoing maintenance of our timeless church and worship facilities. ■



OUR ADULT MINISTRIES

Guided and supported by our Adult Education Commission, Fifth Avenue Baptist offers a wide range of adult education programs for all age groups.

In addition to overseeing Sunday School curriculum for our five adult Sunday School classes, the Adult Education Commission sponsors smaller group activities for men, women, senior adults, and college students. We offer a morning women's Bible study, which meets at the church. Many of our Sunday School classes facilitate short-term small group studies of their own to encourage class members to engage with one another in spiritual growth, prayer, and fellowship in a more intimate setting.



During the winter months, the Adult Education Commission sponsors a three-day spiritual growth retreat, usually held in the hills of West Virginia at Parchment Valley Conference Center. In the summer, we combine our adult Sunday School classes for a four-week session that promotes intergenerational fellowship and study. Each December, we offer a special Advent class for anyone not currently a member of a Sunday School class. To minister to college students beyond Sunday morning worship, our college ministry includes support for Baptist Campus Ministries at Marshall University.



ages to come together for fellowship and fun. Recent years have included musical entertainment from our children and Instrumental Ensemble.

The Adult Education Commission also sponsors our annual church-wide picnic and oversees our church library, a growing collection of books, reference materials, and media for all ages. Our two 14-passenger buses, or two 12 passenger vans are available to provide transportation to special events and on Sunday provide transportation for senior adult members and friends who live at Woodlands, Huntington's largest retirement center. ■



OUR YOUTH MINISTRIES

Members of FAB Youth participate in a wide range of activities that build their faith, equip them for the future, and encourage them in their discipleship and fellowship with one another.

Our youth group meets twice a week during the school year. On Wednesday and Sunday evenings, youth gather for **LARGE GROUP** to participate in mission projects, worship services, game activities, and Bible Study.

Each December, our youth take underserved children Christmas shopping and serve them lunch afterward a mission they fundraise for utilizing church activities such as a **CAR WASH** and an annual **SPAGHETTI DINNER**.

We regularly enjoy fellowship and discipleship with other youth groups in the West Virginia Baptist Convention. Our youth attend weeklong camps held throughout the summer at **CAMP COWAN**, youth conventions held in churches throughout the state, and other events that feature engaging guest speakers, uplifting music, and unique opportunities for spiritual growth.

Our Youth participate in seasonal trips of Christian Fellowship such as a **SKI TRIP**, **WHITE WATER RAFTING**, **KINGS ISLAND**, **CORN MAZE**, and **FAB CAMP**.

At FAB, we believe that our youth are not only the *future* leaders of our church; they are leaders today as well. Members of our youth regularly lead in worship, and our annual **YOUTH SUNDAY** service is entirely organized and led by youth. Our youth also travel on national and international **MISSION TRIPS**, completing construction projects, leading Vacation Bible Schools, and sharing the love of God with others.



FAB Camp, held each August at a Baptist camp just outside of Huntington, is a chance for our youth to prepare spiritually for the challenges of the school year, welcome the incoming 6th graders, and say goodbye to the graduating seniors.

Revolutions Ministries or **REVS** is our Young Adult Ministry started in 2021. This group conducts a Sunday night contemporary worship service in our Chapel, mission projects in the Huntington Community, regularly meetings for in-home Bible Study, and gathers monthly for fellowship events. This ministry is primarily focused on the young adults in college that are not connected to a campus ministry. ■



OUR CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

The children's ministry at Fifth Avenue Baptist Church plants seeds of faith in the lives of our children that will one day, by God's grace, grow and bear fruit.

Our goal is to provide a safe, loving, and faith-filled atmosphere for our children. We offer age-appropriate Bible studies, worship services, mission opportunities, fellowship, and other activities to nurture our children as they grow in stature and in faith. We want our children to feel at home in the church, to recognize their brothers and sisters in Christ as family, and to be dedicated servants of Christ their entire lives.



During a time called **THE FUTURE** in our Sunday morning worship service, children in kindergarten through fifth grade come to the front of the sanctuary to hear a special sermon, then exit for their own time of worship and prayer. Once a month, the children remain in the sanctuary to worship with their parents. Our youngest children, ages 0-5, have Bible study and activities in their own rooms during the adult worship hour.

During the school year, our children participate in **CHOIR & DISCIPLESHIP** activities on Wednesday evenings. Sunday activities include **MISSION** events, with children of all ages and abilities joining together to help those in need; **FAMILY WORSHIP NIGHT**, with children and youth leading in prayer, music, and other roles; and activities that encourage children to share Jesus with their friends and family. **OUTREACH**, in the fall, each family in our children's ministry "adopts" a homebound member of FAB and visits with that person once a week.



We want our children to feel at home when they are at church, but we also want them to realize the importance of "being church" outside our building. During the summer, our children and their families gather at different spots throughout our city for Bible study, fellowship, and mission activities. Our annual **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL** held each June is an opportunity for children to introduce their friends and neighbors to our church family. ■



OUR MUSIC MINISTRY

At Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, we believe God hears the heart. Regardless of musical ability, our congregation participates in hymns and other singing – not only to praise God, but to grow in faith as well.



PHOTO BY BOB HARDWICK

Our **CHANCEL CHOIR** rehearses on Wednesday evenings following the adult Bible study. The choir sings on Sunday mornings and occasionally presents seasonal programs. Their music includes a mix of styles, and the group has fun making music together to the glory of God.



PHOTO BY BOB HARDWICK

Our **ADVANCED HANDBELLS** group plays in the worship service for special occasions and holiday services throughout the year. Occasionally, a **F A B BEGINNING HANDBELLS** group is organized, too, as an introduction to handbells and reading music. Made up of winds, strings, and percussion instruments, our **INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE** plays in the Sunday service often during the holiday seasons.

Children can participate in **MUSIC ACTIVITIES** for **PRESCHOOLERS**

And older **CHILDREN** on Wednesday evenings. Songs and activities are often integrated with Bible studies and themes present in other areas of the children's ministry.

Other music groups come together to prepare for a particular Sunday or event, such as , our young adults ensemble and praise band, provide a contemporary music style to our programming.



Each December, our church family comes together for to sing to homebound members and friends – no musical skills required! ■



OUR CHURCH STAFF

Our current staff includes the following:

MINISTERIAL STAFF

Senior Minister
Associate Minister of Youth & Young Adults
Associate Minister of Children
Organist

SUPPORT STAFF

Communications Director
Financial Secretary
Office Administrator
Maintenance Supervisor
Pastoral Care Coordinator

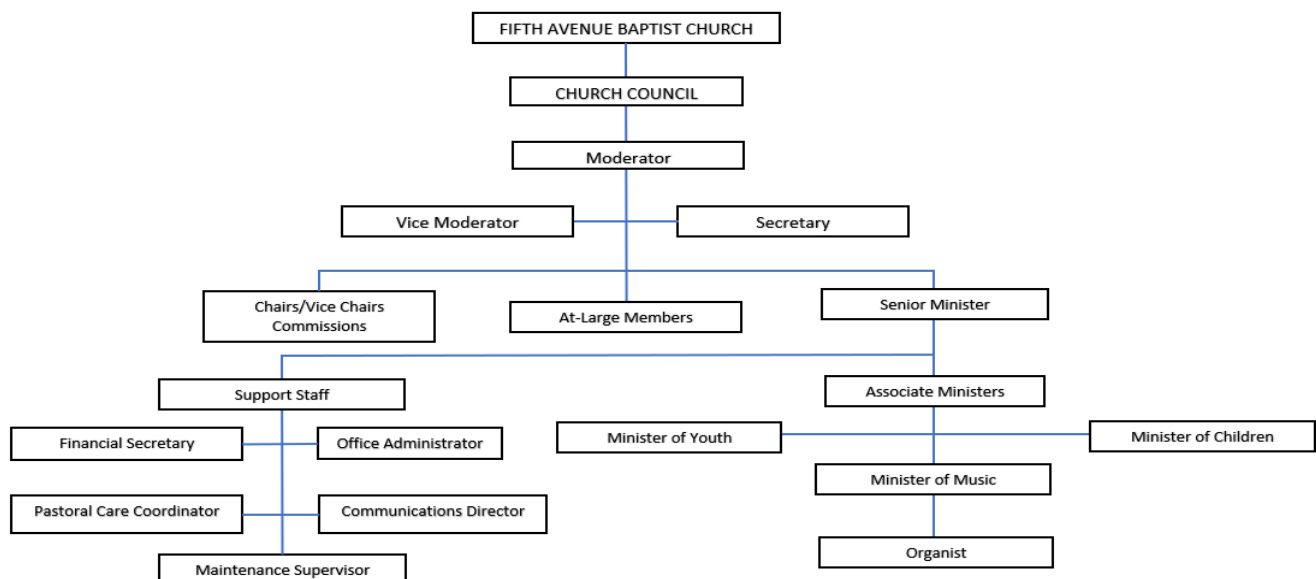


FIFTH AVENUE BAPTIST NURSERY & PRECHOOL

In 2014, FAB Nursery & Preschool celebrated its 50th year of serving children in our community. FAB Nursery & Preschool, lovingly called FABCare, is a nonprofit program under the supervision of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church Council and is directly governed by the Child Care Committee of Fifth Avenue Baptist Church. This ministry serves children of various backgrounds from throughout the Tri-State. In 2013, FAB Nursery & Preschool added a collaborative pre-K classroom in association with the Cabell County Board of Education. FAB Nursery & Preschool currently ministers to 104 children, with a staff of 35. ■

OUR ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The organizational structure of the church provides for a Church Council and seven commissions. Church Council is composed of commission chairs and vice chairs, as well as 12 at-large members of the church. There are five program commissions: Worship & Evangelism, Missions & Ministries, Adult Education, Youth Education, and Children Education. Our two administrative commissions are Property Management and Finance Management. Each commission, composed of up to 25 individuals, meets monthly to execute the duties assigned by the church through its constitution, bylaws, and manual of policies and procedures. ■



COMMUNITY LINKS:

Huntington Convention and Visitors Bureau
<https://visithuntingtonwv.org/>

LIVABILITY Magazine
<https://livability.com/advantage-valley/>

Downtown Huntington
<https://downtownhuntington.net/>

Marshall Artists Series
<https://www.marshall.edu/muartistseries/#/>

Huntington Mall
<https://www.huntingtonmall.com/>

Beech Fork State Park
<https://wvstateparks.com/park/beece-fork-state-park/>

Huntington Quarterly
<https://huntingtonquarterly.com/>

Huntington Museum of Art
<https://hmoa.org/>

Heritage Farm Museum and Village
<https://heritagefarmmuseum.com/>

Huntington Children's Museum
<https://hcmkids.org/>

Huntington Symphony Orchestra
<https://www.huntingtonsymphony.org/>

Greater Huntington Park & Recreation
<https://www.ghprd.org/>

City of Huntington
<https://www.cityofhuntington.com/>

Mountain Health Arena
<https://www.mountainhealtharena.com/>



PHOTO COURTESY OF HUNTINGTON QUARTERLY

