

Position Title: Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church of Kennett Square

The First Baptist Church of Kennett Square is a congregation rooted in the love of Christ and committed to faithful witness in our community. As we enter a new season of ministry, we seek a pastor to help us discern God's future, deepen discipleship, strengthen community engagement, and lead us into our next chapter of faithful service.

First Baptist Church of Kennett Square is an American Baptist congregation in the heart of Chester County, Pennsylvania. We are a congregation of about 40 active members committed to worship, discipleship, mission, and community engagement. We seek a pastor who values collaborative leadership, spiritual formation, and innovation in ministry.

We are prepared to offer a position ranging from half-time to full-time, with the final scope of work to be co-determined based on the chosen candidate's gifts and our evolving strategic vision. Rather than seeking a pastor to fit a predetermined mold, we seek a ministry partner with whom we can discern and shape a faithful future.

Compensation and benefits will be commensurate with the final agreed-upon hours and the candidate's experience, in accordance with the guidelines of American Baptist Churches in the USA. Candidates engaged in or seeking bi-vocational ministry are encouraged to apply.

Core Responsibilities (50%): Worship, Care, and Congregational Leadership

The congregation has identified these responsibilities as essential, regardless of the final position structure. Additional responsibilities will be developed collaboratively, taking into account the pastor's gifts, interests, and the agreed-upon level of employment.

- **Worship Leadership & Preaching:** Preparation and leadership of the primary weekly service.
- **Essential Pastoral Care:** Responding to crises, hospitalizations, and officiating "rites of passage" (funerals and weddings).
- **Basic Administration:** Moderating board meetings and maintaining essential communication with church staff or key volunteers.
- **Teaching:** Leading one mid-week Bible study or small group.
- **Moderating Governance:** Preparing agendas and presiding over necessary business meetings to ensure denominational or legal compliance.

Expansion (Up to 100%): Strategic Growth, Community Impact, and Depth

- **Community Engagement & Outreach:** "Building meaningful partnerships with local organizations, schools, community leaders, and neighboring congregations to expand the church's witness and impact."
- **Strategic Planning & Visioning:** Leading the congregation through long-term goal setting, capital campaigns, or revitalization projects.
- **Leadership Development:** Actively recruiting, training, and mentoring lay leaders and volunteers to expand the church's ministry capacity.
- **Expanded Pastoral Care:** Proactive visitation (not just crisis-based), such as "get-to-know-you" coffee meetings with new members or home visits for the elderly.
- **Digital Ministry and Community Communications:** Overseeing social media, podcasting, or blogging to engage the "digital front porch" of the community.
- **Program Development:** Launching and sustaining new ministries (e.g., youth programs, justice initiatives, or specialized support groups).

- **Staff Supervision:** Providing direct oversight and professional development for other paid staff or interns.

Desired Qualifications

- Master of Divinity Degree or equivalent
- Ordained or ordainable within the American Baptist tradition
- Demonstrated gifts in preaching and teaching
- Strong interpersonal and pastoral care skills
- Ability to work collaboratively with lay leaders and a ministry team
- Experience in community engagement and leadership development
- Commitment to racial justice, inclusion, and Christian witness in a diverse society

Collaborative Leadership

We believe ministry is most effective when clergy and laity serve as partners. We seek a pastor who can equip, empower, and develop others for ministry rather than carrying every responsibility alone.

We recognize that God is calling both congregations and pastors into new models of ministry for a changing world. We are excited to discern together what faithful, sustainable, and impactful ministry can look like in Kennett Square for years to come.

Application Instructions: Interested candidates must submit:

1. A cover letter expressing their sense of calling to FBC Kennett Square
2. A current résumé or Profile registered with the American Baptist Personnel Services - <https://abhms.org/empowering-leaders/american-baptist-personnel-services>
3. A statement of faith and philosophy of ministry (2-4 pages, double-spaced)
4. and references to pastorsearch@ksqfbc.com by August 15, 2026.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF KENNETT SQUARE

CHURCH PROFILE 2026

WHO WE ARE

Riding the Wave of God's Spirit

Empowered by the Spirit of Christ, First Baptist Church of Kennett Square (FBC) seeks to be a welcoming and thoughtful community of faith. We are grounded in a heritage of freedom and responsibility, open to the questions of our time, and united in our desire to follow Jesus in love, humility, and service.

Founded in 1883, FBC looks forward to celebrating its Sesquicentennial (2033), "Alive in Mission", in seven short years. Affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA (ABCUSA) and the American Baptist Churches of Pennsylvania and Delaware (ABCOPAD), FBC engages in global and domestic missions through the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries) and the American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS).

We are located in the heart of Kennett Square, PA—a vibrant, diverse borough often called the "Mushroom Capital of the World". Kennett Square is rich in culture and history, including attractions such as Longwood Gardens, community festivals, and excellent schools, restaurants, and local businesses.

Our Mission: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:18–20) & "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart...' And 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37–40).

Our Vision: First Baptist Church is a Christ-Centered, Holy Spirit-led community seeking to employ our gifts to meet the needs of individuals and families, empowering people to grow into mature followers of Jesus.

Our Values

- **People Matter:** People matter to God, so they matter to us.
- **Spiritual Growth:** We journey with people to help them grow into mature followers of Jesus.
- **Nurturing Children:** Children are made by God and for God, so we nurture them in wisdom and stature.

- **Power of Prayer:** We commit to listening for the “still small voice of God”.
- **Caring Community:** ALL are created in the image of God so we help people connect with a caring community.
- **Stewardship:** We serve as Stewards of all God has entrusted to us.
- **Encountering God:** We provide worship experiences that help people encounter the living God.
- **Witness:** We contribute positively to the life of the greater Kennett Square community.
- **Biblical Truth:** We remain faithful to the message of the Old and New Testaments.
- **Faithfulness:** We treasure God’s faithfulness, celebrating our history without being held captive by tradition.

RECENT PASTORAL LEADERSHIP

THE REV. DANIEL J. NICEWONGER was a significant figure in the recent history of the First Baptist Church of Kennett Square (FBC), serving as its last settled pastor during a pivotal period of revitalization and personal challenge. Known affectionately as "Pastor Dan," he is remembered for his transparent leadership style, his focus on community outreach, and his public journey with cancer, which he chronicled to help others find faith in suffering.

Rev. Nicewonger served as the Senior Pastor of FBC Kennett Square from **2014 to 2021** and was known for rejecting the "Super Pastor" model—the idea that a pastor must do everything perfectly. Instead, he empowered lay leadership and encouraged the congregation to take ownership of the ministry.

In 2021, Rev. Nicewonger resigned as Senior Pastor to transition into a new role as an "elder of outreach and spiritual formation catalyst, focusing on broader community spiritual formation rather than day-to-day church administration.

He was deeply involved in the Kennett Square community and championed the Kennett Square Ministerium. In May of 2024, just weeks before his death, he was honored as the **Outstanding Citizen of the Year** by the Southern Chester County Chamber of Commerce for his contributions to the region.

THE REV. DR. AIDSAND F. "ACE" WRIGHT-RIGGINS has served FBC as Intentional Interim Pastor since April of 1924. He is best known for his transformative leadership as the Executive Director (CEO) of the **American Baptist Home Mission Societies (ABHMS)**. He served in this capacity from 1991 to 2015, holding the longest tenure of any leader in the organization's nearly 200-year history. During his 24 years at the helm, he oversaw nearly 5,800 churches and numerous colleges and seminaries, guiding the denomination through significant cultural shifts with a focus on social justice, refugee resettlement, and discipleship. Upon his retirement, he was designated Executive Director Emeritus, an honor never before bestowed by the organization.

Before his national denominational leadership, Dr. Wright-Riggins established deep roots in pastoral ministry and civil rights activism. Known affectionately as "Rev. Ace," he served for

nearly 20 years as a pastor in California, most notably leading the historic Macedonia Baptist Church in South Central Los Angeles, one of the oldest and largest congregations in the area. Concurrent with his pastoral work, he served as the Director of Peace with Justice for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)—the organization founded by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.—where he worked to bridge divides between African American and Euro-American communities and advocate for human rights.

In recent years, Dr. Wright-Riggins has shifted his focus to local public service and consultancy. In 2017, he was elected **Mayor of Collegeville, Pennsylvania**. His platform has focused on fostering inclusivity and community dialogue across political and social boundaries. Within the context of **First Baptist Church of Kennett Square**, he has revitalized a prayer ministry, Bible Study, and community engagement in his role as Intentional Interim Pastor.

THE PASTOR WE SEEK

A Shepherd and a Bridge-Builder

We seek a leader who balances deep internal care with active external engagement. As a **shepherd**, this pastor nurtures the spiritual well-being of the congregation by providing guidance, protection, and a comforting presence during life's trials. As a **bridge builder**, they actively promote unity among different groups—such as generations, cultures, or theological perspectives—and create meaningful connections between the church and the surrounding community. Ultimately, this person shepherds the flock's existing unity while boldly expanding its reach to new people and places.

To be transparent about our needs, we have distinguished between the qualities that are non-negotiable for our specific context ("Essentials") and the gifts that would be a blessing to our future growth ("Desirables").

Essential Qualities (Non-Negotiables)

- **Theologically Rooted & Open:** A leader grounded in Jesus Christ, scripture, the Christian story, and attuned to the questions and cultures of today's world who offers wisdom that is intellectually engaging and spiritually nourishing.
- **Compassionate Shepherd:** A leader who prioritizes tender care for the flock—visiting the sick, grieving, and doubting, and building deep interpersonal connections.
- **Revitalization Vision:** An ability to see beyond "maintenance mode" and lead a historic congregation into a new season of growth.
- **Stewardship Leader:** Someone who shifts the conversation from simply **funding the budget** to **discipling the giver**. Instead of merely managing shortages, they teach the congregation that everything they have—minutes, skills, and money—belongs to God and is entrusted to them to manage for the flourishing of the Kingdom.

- **Collaborative Leader:** Someone who values shared leadership, works in harmony with our Boards and Leadership Teams, and nurtures lay gifts rather than carrying the ministry load alone.
- **Inclusive Spirit:** A "Bridge-Builder" who actively welcomes all people—including the doubting, seeking, and marginalized—into the full life of the church.

Desirable Qualities (Highly Valued)

- **Community Connector:** Experience or strong interest in interfaith dialogue, social justice initiatives, and local partnerships.
- **Cross-Cultural Awareness:** Sensitivity to the diverse demographics of our region and an enthusiasm for deepening our partnership with the Monte Horeb, a Guatemalan congregation that share our church facilities.
- **Digital Fluency:** An openness to expanding our reach through digital ministry and streaming capabilities.

SUPPORTING OUR SHEPHERD

We understand that a healthy pastor leads a healthy church. We are committed to supporting the personal, professional, and spiritual well-being of our next leader.

- **Transparency & Covenant:** We believe in clear, written understandings. We are committed to full transparency regarding employment terms, benefits, and church realities, ensuring our pastor feels secure, understood, and protected in their calling.
- **Compensation & Benefits:** We offer a competitive salary package commensurate with experience. This includes:
 - A housing allowance and a potential Parsonage option.
 - Health Insurance coverage for the pastor
- **Professional Development:** We encourage and fund time for Continuing Ministerial Education (CME), reading weeks, and annual retreats to ensure our pastor remains spiritually refreshed and intellectually engaged.
- **Expenses:** The church reimburses all legitimate professional working expenses in full.
- **Shared Ministry:** The pastor will not be working in isolation. He or she will be supported by capable Teaching and Worship Team members. FBC has a dedicated administrator and committed lay leadership

THE OPPORTUNITY: WHY FBC KENNETT SQUARE?

Reframing our Reality for the Right Leader

To the candid candidate: On paper, we present a unique paradox. We are a historic congregation with a small, intimate worshipping body, yet we possess the financial stability and facilities of some larger institutions. We are not looking for a chaplain to manage a decline; we are looking for a visionary to lead a revitalization and re-missioning. We are a church with a strong foundation ready for a new season of growth:

1. Financial Health & Stability

- **Strategic Reserves :** We have a pool of cash reserves that we invest and steward to address unforeseen events and budget shortfalls.

- **Debt-Free:** We own our facilities and have strong support for capital improvements.
- **Sustainable Budgeting:** We are right-sizing our operating budget to align with current giving trends while maintaining strong reserves for growth.
- **Financial Overview:** We are transitioning from a reliance on reserves to a model of sustainable stewardship. We seek a pastor who can lead this cultural shift by discipling our congregation in generosity, particularly encouraging the ~30% of regular attendees who have yet to partner financially in our mission.

2. A Prime Location & Demographic Kennett Square is a thriving, diverse hub in Southern Chester County.

Diversity: The area is approximately 34% Hispanic, 54% Caucasian, and 4% Black or African American. FBC is situated to bridge these communities. For full demographics of our region, please visit City-Data: Kennett Square.

- **Growth:** New apartment complexes and developments are bringing new residents to our doorstep.
- **Partnerships:** We have an established relationship with Monte Horeb, a Guatemalan congregation that shares our building, and we host Alcoholics Anonymous groups daily. The infrastructure for community connection is already laid.

3. Membership Context Like many congregations, our Sunday attendance (approx. 40 people) was impacted by the pandemic and cultural shifts. However, this number does not tell the whole story.

- **Resilience:** During the transition, we upgraded our streaming capabilities, improved our facilities, and strengthened our lay leadership.
- **Seekers:** We are seeing upticks in "Friends of First Baptist" and seekers engaging with us.
- **Potential:** The "remnant" here is dedicated, financially generous, and tired of "maintenance mode." We are ready to move from stabilization to revitalization and re-missioning.

WORSHIP & MINISTRY

Theology of Worship We believe worship is about focusing on God in Christ and must be "transportational and transformational"—about an experiential encounter that leads to real change in the real world. Our Worship Team meets weekly not just to rehearse, but to pray and center themselves on the Spirit.

Service Schedule

- Sunday School: 10:00 AM
- Sunday Morning Worship: 11:00 AM
- The Lord's Supper: First Sunday Mornings
- Prayer Services: Tuesdays at 6:30 AM and Thursdays at Noon
- Bible Study: Seasonally, Thursdays at 7:00 PM

J.A.M. Christian Daycare Jesus and Me (J.A.M.) is a year-round ministry serving families with children from six weeks to five years of age.

- **Scope:** Serving ~32 children from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
- **Excellence:** STAR 4 rating in the Keystone STARS program.
- **Mission:** Partnering with parents to develop the whole child—cognitively, socially, physically, and spiritually. **Monte Horeb Partnership** We support Monte Horeb, a Guatemalan congregation that uses our building. We occasionally have held joint worship services and partner for community events.

Community Ministry Within Our Walls FBC strives to be a "7 days a week" church.

- **Recovery Groups:** Five different AA groups meet here six days a week, including the "Mid-Day Miracles" group which has met here for over 23 years. NA meets weekly on Wednesday evenings.
- **Kacie's Cause:** A support group for families dealing with substance abuse disorder meets monthly.
- **Sports Ministry:** For over 30 years, we have participated in the Southern Chester County Church Sports League. Games open and close with prayer, reaching many who do not attend church elsewhere.

OUR FACILITIES: A HUB FOR MINISTRY

Our building is a tool for mission, not a museum piece. Located at 415 W State Street, our facilities are debt-free and serve as a bustling community hub seven days a week.

- **The Sanctuary:** A historic and intimate space designed to help people encounter the living God.
- **Community Spaces:** Our facility includes a full kitchen and various meeting rooms. These spaces host our daily Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and community events.
- **Condition & Care:** Our buildings are currently in good repair. We have a proactive maintenance plan in place. We recognize that buildings require care, but our strong cash reserves ensure that maintenance does not compete with the ministry for funding.

SWOT ANALYSIS (SUMMARY)

Strengths (Internal)

- Significant Cash Reserves (Runway for Growth)
- Debt-Free Facilities
- J.A.M. Daycare (Rated Star 4)
- Committed Lay Leadership & Teaching Team
Biblically based sermons/services

Weaknesses (Internal)

- Aging membership base
- Sunday attendance numbers
- Limited youth/children programming currently
- Reluctance to change traditions
- Uneven distribution of financial contributors
* Small leadership and volunteer base

Opportunities (External)

- Demographic Growth (Young families/diverse pop.)
- Monte Horeb Partnership (Hispanic community)
- Asset Usage (Fellowship Hall, Kitchen for community)
- Stewardship Discipleship

Threats (External)

- Increasing secularization of the region
- Post-COVID disconnect from organized religion
- Economic pressures on young families

STAFF LIST:

- (1) Part-time Church Administrative Assistant
- (1) Part-time Church Custodian
- (1) Full Time Preschool Director
- Cohort of Preschool Teachers and Assistants
- (1) Voluntary Certified Lay Minister / Minister of Music

CONTACT & LINKS

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