



The Good Shepherdess by Kelly Latimore

**Installation Service for Rev. Julie Whidden Long
as Pastor of the First Baptist Church of Christ**

Prelude

“Convocation”
John Thomas Long, acolyte

Charles Callahan

Words of Gathering

Dan Riley
Chair, Pastor Search Committee

Call to Worship

Stella Johansen

“Thus says the Lord,” the prophet announced to the exiles in Babylon. The Lord, the Creator of Israel, who made a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters, in order to bring the Israelites out of bondage in Egypt, will now end the captivity of the exiles and bring them home: “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?”

The Lord made a way for us, too, a pathway for following Jesus, when God created the First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon in 1826. And we perceive God’s newness springing forth in our midst today as we install Julie Whidden Long as our pastor and look to the future that God has for us.

“Comfort, O comfort, my people,” God called to the prophet. “Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.” A hurting people must know that the Lord cares for them, that they belong to God, carried in the arms of the Lord like motherless lambs, if they are to trust confidently in the reconciliation and homecoming that God intends.

Our pastor has called us, too, to speak tenderly to each other, to ask for and offer forgiveness, to speak with truth, not pride, and receive each other with kindness, tenderheartedly, so that we will become a model of authentic belonging, of how the love of God can bring unity out of diversity.

“Listen,” said the Lord to the remnant of Jacob, whom God has borne from birth, carried from the womb. “I am with you, and I will forgive your transgressions and save you. I will have compassion for you and love you with an everlasting love,” said the Lord.

We hear God’s forgiveness in these words. We have not, in ages past or recent days, always loved others as Christ loved us. We have spoken and acted in ways that made others feel diminished and excluded. But God’s grace and compassion will help us truly love one another and be the people “of Christ” in this place.

“Sing a new song. Shout for joy. Do not fear,” the Lord proclaimed to the exiles in Babylon, announcing the divine vision for all peoples, a covenant of peace. The Lord, Creator and Redeemer, will gather both the outcasts of Israel and the peoples of the nations and make them one people, God’s inclusive community, composed of all who follow the way of the Lord in justice and righteousness.

We sing and rejoice today as well, one song, expressed in all our different voices, but united as we commit ourselves anew to the vision that our church “nurtures authentic faith and belonging, loves and serves courageously, and affirms the image of God in all people.”

A Meditation on Isaiah 40–56 and JWJ's First Sermon as Pastor,
 "Members of One Another". Written by Dee Bratcher

*Hymn 306

Come, Christians, Join to Sing

MADRID

Invocation

James Goolsby
Pastor, First Baptist Church of Macon

Scripture Reading

Luke 4:16-20

Ruth Rowell

Anthem

“For Everyone Born”

arr. Tom Trenney

The Chancel Choir
Kathryn Fakeley, cello

For everyone born, a place at the table,
for everyone born, clean water and bread,
a shelter, a space, a safe place for growing,
for everyone born, a star overhead.

Refrain:

And God will delight when we are creators
of justice and joy, compassion and peace:
yes, God will delight when we are creators
of justice, justice and joy!

For young and for old, a place at the table,
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,
the hands of a child in hands that are wrinkled,
for young and for old, the right to belong. (Refrain)

For everyone born, a place at the table,
to live without fear, and simply to be,
to work, to speak out, to witness and worship,
for everyone born, the right to be free. (Refrain)

Text: Shirley Erena Murray

Sermon

“Practicing Christian Hospitality”

Walter B. Shurden

Solo

“How Beautiful Are the Feet”

Anne Thompson

Stanley L. Roberts, baritone

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,
And bring glad tidings of good things.
Their sound is gone out into all lands and their words unto the ends of the world!

Romans 10:15, 18

Written by Anne Thompson in honor of Dr. Howard Giddens

Charge to the Pastor and Congregation

Charles E. Poole

A Covenant of Ministry Together

David Cooke, Chair of Church Council

Tricia Whitby, Chair of Deacons

PASTORAL VOWS

Julie Long, do you accept the call to be pastor of First Baptist Church of Christ at Macon, committing yourself to this new trust and responsibility in the confidence that it comes from God through the call of the church?

With reliance upon God, I do.

Will you be diligent in your study, teaching, and preaching of the Holy Scriptures? Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people; nourish them with the word and the sacraments; and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living, all with an openness to the Spirit of God?

With reliance upon God, I will.

Will you covenant to follow the example of the Good Shepherd in ministering to God's people, tending to them in their joys and sorrows? Will you strive to remember that you, too, are one of the sheep in God's pasture, and that you also need to be renewed in the green pastures and still waters of God's love?

With reliance upon God, I will.

Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do? Will you covenant to call this church to her mission, to deeds of compassion and justice, to live and to love like Jesus?

With reliance upon God, I will

Will you strive to fulfill faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully the duties required of you in the work to which you are being commissioned, following our Lord's example of humble service?

With reliance upon God, I will.

CONGREGATIONAL VOWS

First Baptist Church of Christ family, do you commission Julie Long to be your pastor with the conviction that her calling is from God? And do you commit to respect and honor the office our pastor serves, to be responsive to her leadership, to trust her as a person of integrity and ability, and to love and accept her as your sister in Christ?

With joyful hearts, we do.

Will you give our pastor the freedom in the pulpit to express honest, thoughtful convictions in interpretation of God's Word, mindful that our unity does not require uniformity?

With reliance upon the grace of God, we will.

Will you commit to undergird Julie with daily prayer, positive attitudes, personal support, and hope for our future so that she may serve among you with joy and love?

With reliance upon the grace of God, we will.

Will you commit to journey with Julie in discerning the continuing mission and identity of the church through your presence, gifts, and faithful service both within and beyond the walls of the church?

With reliance upon the grace of God, we will.

Prayer of Installation	Jody Long
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The Laying on of Hands

Solo	TBA
	<i>Stanley L. Roberts, baritone</i>

Hymn 545	In the Bulb	PROMISE
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Music	<i>Kathryn Fakeley, cello</i>
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Hymn 473	Will You Come and Follow Me	KELVINGROVE
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Presentation from the Congregation

Response from the Pastor	Julie Long
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Benediction

Postlude	"Christ Is Made the Sure Foundation"	arr. Anna Laura Page
	<i>Anne Thompson, organ</i>	

BLESSINGS FROM OUR BAPTIST COMMUNITY

As you gather for a service of installation for Julie Long as the new pastor of First Baptist Church of Christ, know that the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship family and I are praying for Julie, her family, and all of your congregation as you begin this new season of ministry together. We know and love your congregation. We are deeply grateful for your impact in Macon, across the state of Georgia, and far beyond and we also have deep respect for Julie and the significant gifts she brings to pastoral leadership in your church. I pray that in these days of new beginnings, you will all have the grace of seeing one another with even deeper gratitude and that the gifts and abiding convictions you bring will come together in powerful ways for the glory of God and for the transformation of your congregation and your community through Jesus Christ.

Paul Baxley, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Baptist Women in Ministry is excited to celebrate First Baptist Church of Christ's call of Rev. Julie Long as their next senior pastor. According to our records, Pastor Julie will be the thirteenth female pastor currently serving a Baptist church in Georgia. During a time when Baptists are more known for their exclusion and oppression of women, we commend FBCX for demonstrating its long-held commitment to women's full value to God by removing any limitations placed on women in the life of the church. Our organization benefited from Pastor Julie's ministry when she served as associate director during a pivotal time of the organization's growth, and we look forward to seeing how FBCX will continue to benefit from her compassionate and thoughtful leadership in the years ahead.

Meredith Stone, Executive Director, Baptist Women in Ministry

To be asked to offer words of support for Rev. Julie W. Long's installation as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Christ at Macon is to show my bias toward her and this good church, for she is the best pastor for one of the best churches in a time such as this. For more than twenty years, the First Baptist Church of Christ has nurtured, loved, and served alongside Julie and our family. She is one of the most capable, grounded, and thoughtful pastors I know. Julie's gifts have been apparent to this community of faith for quite some time as she served faithfully and well as an associate pastor.

Still, it takes courage for a congregation to call its pastoral leadership from within its ranks. It takes grace for a congregation to truly know someone and yet still believe that person can ably lead them into a season of ministry and mission. It takes love for a congregation to embrace their pastor, listen to her voice, and follow her leading. It takes trust for both a congregation

and a minister to heed God's voice of vocational calling and to commit to each other to follow in the way of Jesus.

Courage, grace, love, and trust: First Baptist Church of Christ has these spiritual gifts in spades. Thanks be to God that Julie will continue to receive these gifts even as she offers her giftedness to this church with these people at this time. Thanks be to God that First Baptist Church of Christ followed the Holy Spirit's leading and has called Julie to serve and lead this grand old church at the Top of Poplar.

Jody Long, Executive Coordinator Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Georgia



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