

The elders at FBC have spent the last year praying and considering the critical question of whether we should change our church's name. We believe that the Lord has led us to do so. As such, it is necessary for us to follow up with the membership for affirmation. In obedience to Him, we, the elders, by call of unanimous vote of approval for a name change, are informing you, of a special membership meeting as per Article 3, Section 2, sub-section 2.2—Special meetings, to affirm our decision to change the name of the church. A vote by ballot will take place on Sunday, September 19, 2021, at 12:00pm.

If affirmed by a majority of members present, we will legally remain The First Baptist Church of Cheyenne (FBC) but seek to do business as “Capital City Church”.

Theologically, we will remain a Baptist church, retain our historical name, retain the same articles of organization filed at the Wyoming Secretary of State's office, and retain the same federal tax-exempt status which we have always had. Upon the affirmation of the majority of members present at the above called meeting, The First Baptist Church of Cheyenne will be referred to as “Capital City Church”, beginning November 7th, 2021.

Through this process, the elders have asked and answered several questions and concerns. Below are the most prominent:

Does a Denomination matter?

Yes, a denomination does matter.

Baptists have historically been known to be *Sola Scriptura* (the Scriptures Alone) churches. Just recently the largest Baptist denomination in the world, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), affirmed a less than *Sola Scriptura* president.

This type of action is not new to Baptist conventions; it happened to the SBC in the 1980's and 90's. Similarly, the American Baptist Convention (ABC), who are largely comprised of First Baptist Churches, chose to reject the doctrines of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures in the 1920's. Ultimately, these types of shifts away from *Sola Scriptura* have turned Baptist denominations into the anti-Bible-Baptists that the ABC represents today. Being a First Baptist Church matters, because it generates a lot of confusion around what our church stands for.

The First Baptist Church of Cheyenne has had its ups and downs like every church. In 2017, the church rightly voted to leave their long-term association with the ABC. However, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of very liberal FBC churches around our nation. The elders' desire is to remain theologically Baptist, without the baggage of the national and international understanding of “First Baptist Churches”.

Does a name matter?

Yes, especially a name so common as "First Baptist Church".

Most towns in the US have one First Baptist Church, if not more. As Laramie County continues to grow, and people migrate from communities with FBCs, they will undoubtedly superimpose their definition, good or bad, onto us.

Regardless of where people move from, we would rather they knew us for who we are, than who they think we might be. We believe that the title "First Baptist Church" creates many mixed theological and practical understandings in today's Christian and secular culture.

It is for these reasons, we believe that we are missing opportunities to be engaged in the lives of some; merely, and regretfully because of the name of our church. In short, a name matters!

What matters to the elders about our church?

First, we care about obedience to the Lord and His leading toward this change.

Second, the elders desire to shepherd an assembly of regenerated people who are devoted to the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures, for the equipping of the saints for the purposes of: I) reaching the lost, II) being committed to the apostle's doctrine, III) fellowshipping, IV) observing the ordinances of communion and baptism, and V) devoting ourselves to prayer.

Although names and church titles are important, often evoking many emotions and memories, they are secondary to the mission of the church described above.

CONCERN #1: How might we know that "First Baptist Church" is deterring some who may otherwise be happy in our church?

We have been gathering data on Google Analytics to better understand those searching for churches in Cheyenne. This data reveals people's church search inquiries.

Over the first 6 weeks of data collection, our website has appeared as an option to those searching for churches in Cheyenne, 330 times. Of those 330 appearances, only 6 people chose to inquire about our church. We believe this is largely due to people's preconceived notions about First Baptist Churches.

Being that there were 6 individuals that chose our website, one might argue that they could be the type of Bible-believing Christians we would want in our assembly. We agree. Therefore, we will remain theologically Baptist.

CONCERN #2: Are we becoming a “seeker-sensitive church?”

No. There is a difference between being “*seeker-sensitive*” and having “*seeker-sensitivity*”.

Seeker-sensitive churches are willing to sacrifice or avoid what God has said in His word for the purpose of getting more people into a church service. Examples of this would be avoiding more difficult teachings on topics like sin, Hell, gender roles, church leadership, race, sexual ethics, and others.

On the other hand, having *seeker-sensitivity* is being willing to recognize and change areas of tradition, that are not biblically mandated. The principle of *becoming all things to all mankind so that some might be saved*, is important (1Cor. 9:19-23). *Seeker-sensitivity* decisions like being called First Baptist Church, what kind of music and instruments to play and have, whether to have heating/cooling/lights, or how we clean our facilities, are always being considered to better enhance our opportunity to make disciples.

Being *Sola Scriptura* Baptists, we will not compromise or ignore the Scriptures in an effort to appeal to an increasingly secular church culture; becoming *Seeker-sensitive*. However, we want to have the *seeker-sensitivity* endorsed in the Scriptures (1Cor. 9:19-23), so that we can reach and disciple as many as possible.

In conclusion, the elders believe it is necessary to change our church’s name to be obedient to the Lord, and to disassociate with cultural, preconceived notions about First Baptist Churches, all for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry!

With deep sincerity, and on behalf of the elders,

Karl R. Pickard

Karl R. Pickard
Lead Pastor/Teacher
The First Baptist Church of Cheyenne