

# Baptist Briefs: Baptist protestors arrested in Missouri

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Four of the 57 people arrested Aug. 10 in a peaceful protest outside a federal courthouse in St. Louis were part of an eight-member [Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America](#) delegation in Ferguson, Mo., there to observe the one-year anniversary of the Aug. 9, 2014, police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown. U.S. Attorney Richard Callahan issued a statement saying the arrests were for “obstructing the normal use” of entrances to the Thomas Eagleton Federal Courthouse. They occurred during an “otherwise peaceful and nonviolent” march by about 200 protestors through downtown St. Louis in a day of civil disobedience dubbed “Moral Monday.” BPFNA Executive Director LeDayne McLeese Polaski identified the four arrested delegation members as Martha Kearse, associate minister at St. John’s Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C.; Tremaine Sails-Dunbar, a senior at American Baptist College in Nashville, Tenn.; Barbara Smalley-McMahan, a pastoral counselor and American Baptist minister active in previous Moral Monday protests in North Carolina; and Alexis Tardy, a recent graduate of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis and former intern in the office of Congressman André Carson, D-Ind.

## **Opponents of gay rights ordinance rally in Arkansas Baptist church.**

More than 200 people gathered Aug. 11 in a Southern Baptist church in Fayetteville, Ark., to rally against a proposed civil rights ordinance opponents say poses a threat to religious liberty. The rally at [University Baptist Church](#) featured Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of an Oregon bakery fined \$135,000 for discrimination after refusing to bake a cake for a lesbian wedding. Protect Fayetteville, the group that organized the rally, says Ordinance 5781, up for voter approval in a special election Sept. 8, could result in similar action against people of conscience who own

businesses in northwest Arkansas. In June, the Fayetteville City Council voted 6-2 to pass on to voters an ordinance extending protection in existing anti-discrimination laws to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender citizens and visitors. Critics say the Uniform Civil Rights Protection Ordinance largely rehashes an earlier civil rights ordinance approved last year by aldermen but later repealed by voters 52 percent to 48 percent. While the ordinance exempts churches and religious organizations, opponents say it could force Christians who live and work outside of the church or religious organizations to do things contrary to their faith or suffer fines.