



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

October 2021

First Baptist Family,

To prepare for our October emphasis, I've read quite a bit on stewardship lately. And in my reading, I found a particular article in the Christian Century that really resonated with me. The article is entitled "What's Another Word for Stewardship?" by Diane Roth. Roth begins her article by noting her disappointment with the way stewardship is broadly understood today. Most people think it only has to do with money, but in reality, stewardship means so much more. And I must admit that this misunderstanding, this incorrect definition makes a lot of pastors just not want to talk about stewardship at all. Roth highlights that very point herself writing that "part of it is that no one wants to talk about money, and there's nothing you can do about that. And the word 'stewardship' has these connotations about being guilted and shaken down and provoked to 'give more' to this institution that pays salaries and has to fix its building. And then we get some money, but it never seems like enough, so a feeling of failure pervades us." When I read those words, I said, "amen." There just never seems to be enough does it? There's always something that needs to be fixed around the church campus or a bill that's gone up. There's always a worthy mission or ministry that could use more of our financial support. I mean ministry costs money and if you want church ministries to grow, you have to fund them adequately. And staff members could use a cost of living raise every so often, couldn't they? I mean there's always something. Regardless of the resources we have, it seems like the needs just outweigh them. All of it is enough to make you depressed. And when you factor in all of the uncertainty that's been caused by this pandemic, it's easy to move beyond depression to fear. I get it. As someone whose salary is paid by your tithes, believe me, I get better than I can possibly express. But I think our fears and discomfort are being driven by the wrong definition of stewardship rather than the right one. In her own way, Roth makes this point, too.

She writes, "Maybe we need a different word, one that somehow brings to our imagination all of the things we can do together, when we pool the resources that God has entrusted us with. Maybe we need a different word, a word that brings to our imaginations the mission of God and all of the resources that God has given us, so that we can share it." You see stewardship isn't just about money. It's about so much more because it's about celebrating God's goodness. It's about celebrating all the ways God has blessed us, ways we never could have imagined, and giving a portion of those blessings back in thanksgiving, giving a portion of those blessings back so we can bless someone else. Ultimately, stewardship is about commitment. It's about committing ourselves to an alternative view of the world, one in which we remember and celebrate the gracious bounty God has provided us rather than believing in the myth of scarcity. It's about committing ourselves to being joyful and generous in our giving because in doing so we

remember that God gave to us first. It's about committing and remembering and celebrating, and those things are far, far more important than money.

So, this month I want to challenge you. I want to challenge you to think about your commitment to God. How are you honoring God with your time? Are you reading your Bible, and I mean really reading your Bible with the expectation that doing so will change you? How's your prayer life? Are you doing things that show a commitment to growing spiritually? How are you using the gifts God has given you? Are you using them for self-gratification and self-enrichment or are you using them to help those around you? And finally, how are you showing your commitment to God with your finances? Do you give financially to the church at all? And if you do, have you really taken the time to think what you can afford, or do you just give what you always have because that's easy and comfortable? Are you holding back and giving with a grudge, or are you giving joyfully and generously like God commands? The only person who can honestly answer those questions is you, and your responses are between you and God. But if you feel like God is calling you to do more, I want to encourage you to listen to that calling. And this year, to help you do just that, we're going to be doing something a little different.

While we will have one special Sunday this year in which we focus on stewardship (we're calling it Commitment Sunday), we're actually going to have our church replica out all month rather than just 1 week. Between it and your ability to make your pledge on Realm, you can do so whenever you are ready, though I would encourage you to spend some time in prayer first. Also, we're going to have more than one pledge card this year. One pledge card is going to be for a financial pledge like we have each year, but the other is for you to pledge your time. The other is for you to show your commitment by pledging to attending church services and discipleship opportunities more regularly, or by pledging to serve through volunteering to help with one of our ministries or missions, or by pledging to serve on one of the teams or committees of the church. We're doing this because stewardship really is about more than money; it's about commitment. It's about committing all of ourselves to God and not holding back. And if we want people to grow spiritually, if we hope to grow numerically as a church, that commitment is exactly what we're going to need.

Grace and Peace,

Kris



BLESSING BOX:

The food drop off on Sept. 5 was very successful. Many supplies for Hurley were also donated. The challenge now is to make sure that the food in Rosser is put in the Box on a regular basis. If you are in the church for any reason, take a few extra minutes and put some items in the Box. This is a church-wide ministry and requires the participation of many members. Thank you to all who have been regularly donating time and food.

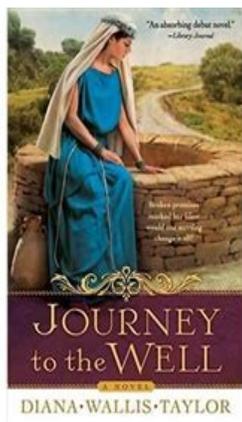
We will no longer be collecting used greeting cards. The children at St. Jude's Ranch are no longer using them.

We will be collecting used or out of date Christian literature. This includes SS material, non-fiction books, audio materials, and magazines. Please place donations in boxes on the rack in the computer room. These materials will be picked up by an organization which will distribute them to foreign areas, especially African countries where English is spoken.



Library Lines October 2021

Journey to the Well by Diana Wallis Taylor donated to our library by Gene and Jane Eller is a well-researched portrayal of a woman's life in the time of Jesus and opens a window into a fascinating world. The author's descriptions of the landscapes, lifestyles, and rituals blend with the emotional and personal story of Marah, the Samaritan woman at the well to whom Jesus told "everything she'd ever done," the one who, in this story, seeks to rise above the difficult circumstances of her life. At the mercy of men who are often only interested in using her, she must fight for survival. Will she meet a man who can save her?



~May Tabor

"All About That Baby"



All Children & Youth are asked to participate in the 2021 Christmas Special. The movie will air at FBC on December 12, 2021. Time TBD.



The 2021 Church Picnic was a huge success!



Our **Quarterly Business Meeting** will be held on **Sunday, October 24**, after the morning worship service. According to our church's by-laws, chairs of teams and boards are asked to give a quarterly report of the group's activities. The report can be either written or oral. If the report is written, please give a copy to the church office so copies can be made for the membership. If at all possible, please submit the report no later than **Thursday, October 21**. The information you share will be helpful in keeping the membership informed of what is happening in our church.



First Baptist Church had the pleasure of having Dr. Vincent Bacote speak as part of King University's lecture series.

**Amazing Grace
How Sweet
The
Sound**

Notes From Leigh...

I love fall – the changing weather, the cooler nights, the beautiful leaves and brilliant blue skies, college football – I just love fall! Fall also means it is time for the choir to begin working toward Advent and Christmas.

Each Wednesday, the choir rehearses at 7:00 p.m. to learn music and to develop our musical blend. We joyfully prepare for weekly worship. We also spend time each week encouraging and praying for one another. I have been so pleased with the faithfulness and growth of this group of people; they truly serve the Lord and this church.

We had some very special music this past month with the Brass Quintet led by Kevin Townsend. He and his wife, Ann, have been attending FBC for several months. Our paths have crossed over the years through the music scene in Southwest VA. I look forward to them sharing more music with us in the near future. We also had Brooke and Darin Aldridge and Samantha Sykes lead us in worship during the Bristol Rhythm and Roots weekend. They were very talented. We hope that they, too, will join us again soon.

Would you like to know more about the music ministries of FBC? I would certainly love to talk with you about ways that we can incorporate your gifts and talents into our weekly worship.

Blessings,

Leigh



First Baptist Church of Bristol Staff

Dr. Kris Aaron.....Senior Pastor
 Rev. Ben Ondrak.....Associate Pastor
 Rev. Leigh Clark.....Minister of Music
 Mrs. Jackie Burnette.....Pianist

Ms. Kaitlyn Courtney.....Sexton
 Mr. Dennis Thomas.....Sexton
 Mrs. Marcine Robinette.....Parish Nurse
 Ms. Terri Thomas Church Administrator
 and Financial Secretary
 Ms. Niki Judy..... Administrative Assistant



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
 125 Sedgefield Street
 Bristol, VA 24201

Deacon of the Week for October

Oct. 03, 2021	Tom Makres
Oct.10, 2021	Terri Cook
Oct. 17, 2021	Bob Love
Oct. 24, 2021	Mark Fuller
Oct. 31, 2021	Brad Talbert

FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

Oct. 03 & 04:	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
Oct. 09 & 10:	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
Oct. 16 & 17:	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
Oct. 24 & 25:	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
Oct. 30 & 31:	Terri Thomas	(423) 963-7576