



125 Sedgefield Street  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

## THE FIRST WORD

November 2022

First Baptist Family,

With Thanksgiving later this month and with thankfulness being our natural focus, it seems only right that I begin by thanking all of you. The Pastor Appreciation Luncheon was an incredibly kind gesture. Thanks to Harry (Chef Harold) and Unique Bakery, we had a wonderful meal. Even better than the meal, though, was the fellowship and the kind words so many of you wrote. Everyone has hard days once and a while, pastors included. A mentor once recommended that I keep a file with little notes of encouragement, so that I could review them when times were tough. I followed his advice, and now your kind and thoughtful words reside at the top of my file. They are deeply appreciated and treasured. I cannot put into words how much they mean to me, so thank you!

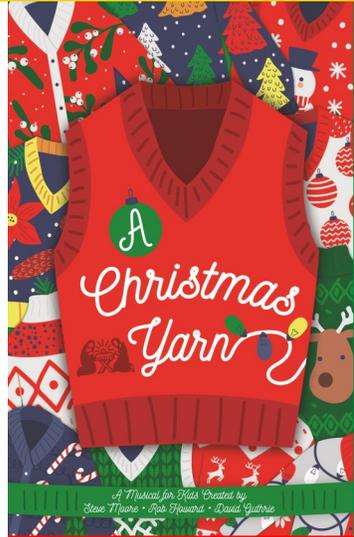
I got home late that Sunday afternoon. After a moving worship service, a nice meal, and reading your kind notes, I had a pre-marital counseling session with a young couple. It went well, so I was really upbeat when I got home; and as I walked through the door what greeted me but the smell of freshly baked cookies. Clary and the kids had done some baking while they were waiting on me. The kids ran up to give me a hug (the dog came up to get attention, too), and I gave Clary a kiss and told her that I could get used to days like this. And in the moment it hit me that I have an awful lot to be thankful for – thankful for a wonderful wife and precious children, thankful for a warm home and reliable transportation, thankful for a job I love and a loving church family. I could go on and on. I have a lot to be thankful for, and if you think about it, I'm sure you do, too. All of us have been greatly blessed, and it's good for us spiritually to take the time to pause and acknowledge it. There are a couple of things we have this month that I believe will help us do just that.

First, on Sunday, November 6, we're going to have our All Saints' service. In this service, we'll remember and give thanks for the saints in our church who have passed away within the past year. This is always a meaningful and moving service, so I hope you'll be able to join us. Second, on Sunday, November 20 at 4 PM, we're going to host a community-wide Thanksgiving service. The service is sponsored by the Bristol Area Ministerial Alliance (BAMA). I hope that you can join us for that one, too. And then on the last Sunday of the month, Sunday, November 27, we'll officially start our Advent festivities!

November is going to be a great month in the life of the church. We'll have our regularly scheduled small groups. Our children and youth will be practicing and preparing for their Christmas play. We'll have some special worship services that will highlight our thankfulness, and we'll begin our Advent preparations. If you're looking for a time to get more involved in the life of the church or if you know of someone that you've been wanting to invite, now is the perfect time to do so. We have all sorts of great things going that you and they will want to be a part of. I know that you'll not only be glad that you came, but you'll be thankful that you did, too. As always, it is a joy to serve as your pastor.

Grace and Peace,

Kris



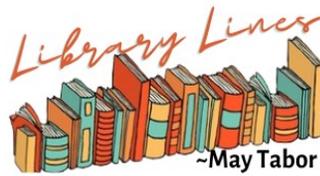
# Children And Youth PRACTICES: Every Wednesday - December 7

**Dinner:  
5:45 p.m.**

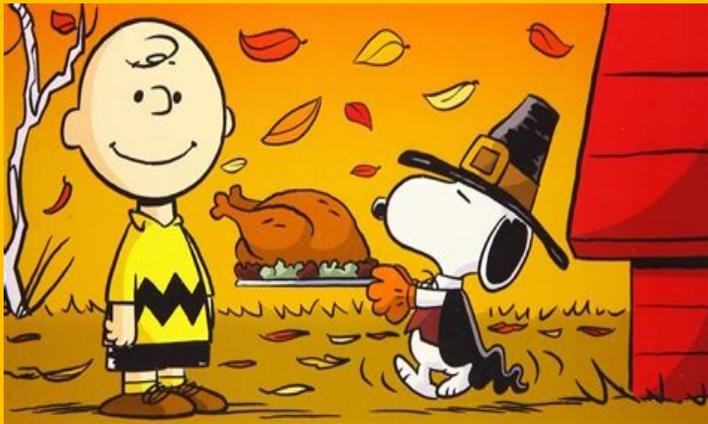
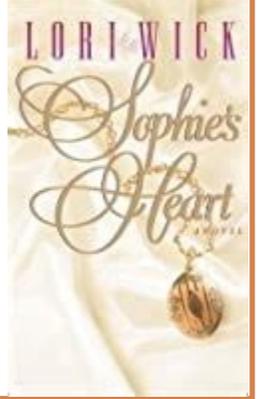
**Drama Practice:  
6:15 - 7:00 p.m.**

*Save the Date*

Sunday,  
December 11, 2022  
5:00 p.m.



*Sophie's Heart* by popular author Lori Wick, a gift of Carolyn Harris, is the newest addition to our Christian fiction collection. The tender story is of Alex, a lonely widower, and Sophie, far from her former home in Czechoslovakia, who, through time and trials, find what their hearts are longing for. The twisting path is filled with the struggles of Alex's three school-age children as they adapt to growing up with a housekeeper instead of a mother and in Alex recognizing that, despite his pain and grief, he must meet his family's needs instead of spending way too much time at work and away from home. Sophie, who was raised in a Christian home, is faithful in seeking her heavenly father's guidance when she encounters inevitable conflicts that arise as she adjusts to her increasingly important role in this especially-needy household.



**Wednesday,  
November 23**

**Thursday,  
November 24**

**Friday,  
November 25**

Community Thanksgiving Service  
**November 20**  
**4:00 p.m.**  
**First Baptist Church**

# NOTES *From Leigh...*

By the time you read this article I should be back. As some of you may know, I am a Chaplain with the BGAV and I have been “called out” to serve in Cape Coral, FL following the devastation of Hurricane Ian. The VA Baptists are teaming up with

the NC Baptists to do recovery work and offer other services to people and communities that have suffered loss and grief. (As a sidenote, I don’t necessarily agree with the NC Baptists on every theological point. However, because we have all received the same commandment – **Love God, Love Others** – we come together to work side by side lifting others up in the name of Jesus. AMEN!)

As a Chaplain, I will meet with families to listen and to offer connection to and coordination of services available from a multitude of organizations, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, food banks, shelters, and FEMA. I will also visit the neighborhoods and homes of people who have lost everything. I will listen to their stories and will offer a hug, a prayer, and perhaps some cold water. Some of my time will be spent helping with the actual physical recovery (“mud out” of homes). I will also be available as a listening ear for the other workers who have come to help and who have witnessed the loss and hurt; they, too, are tired and weary and need care. I will lead devotionals and debrief sessions for all the volunteers who are staying at our location.



Above all, I pray that I will be useful to God – whether that’s through listening ears, fresh eyes, a strong back or gentle hugs. I will return with pictures and stories!



Three other things of note: 1) November is Thanksgiving month. I would like to encourage you, along with your family, to create a *Gratefulness* jar/can. Write down 2-3 things every day that you are grateful for and place them in the can and then read them out loud together at the end of the month! 2) You have been such faithful prayer warriors for me this year with my preventative cancer surgeries. I will have my final implant surgery on Monday, November 7. It will be an outpatient surgery and I expect to recover quickly! 3) I am so thankful to serve such a loving congregation. The staff appreciation lunch was thoughtful and the cake was beautiful! Thank you!

Blessings,  
Leigh



# THANK YOU!

Rev. Ben Ondrak

Rev. Leigh Clark

Dr. Kris Aaron

Mrs. Jackie Burnette

Not Pictured:

Mrs. Andrea Pennington

Terri Thomas and Niki Judy

## 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  
 Mrs. Andrea Pennington .....Organist

Mrs. Marcine Robinette.....Parish Nurse  
 Ms. Terri Thomas ..... Church Administrator  
 and Financial Secretary  
 Ms. Niki Judy..... Administrative Assistant



**Contact Information:**  
**Church Phone:** (276)669-8191  
**Fax:** (276)669-5082  
**Hours:** [info@fbcbristol.org](mailto:info@fbcbristol.org)  
**Website:** [www.fbcbristol.org](http://www.fbcbristol.org)  
 You can also find us on  
 Facebook. 



### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

125 Sedgefield Street  
 Bristol, VA 24201

### Deacon of the Week for November

November 06, 2022	David Hicks
November 13, 2022	Nelson Gwaltney
November 20, 2022	Jordan Pennington
November 27, 2022	Harry Scanlan

### FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

November 05 & 06	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
November 12 & 13	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
November 19 & 20	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
November 26 & 27	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795