



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

August 2025

First Baptist Family,

It's hard to believe that summer is already over and that Fall has begun! Yet, school starts back this month, and soon we will all be returning to a more normal rhythm after having a period of rest and relaxation. I've been thinking about life's rhythms a lot lately. And while we have plenty of things happening this month that I want to share with you, I first want to mention a spiritual practice that I hope you'll join me in moving forward. It's called a Rule of Life. You see, I'm guessing that most of you are like me – you are busy people. Between church and school and the kids' extracurricular activities, I don't know what Clary and I would do without a shared Google calendar – other than constantly miss meetings or be late to everything. And when other opportunities present themselves, even good things that we would normally be interested in, well, they can often feel like just one more thing that we have to squeeze in and plan for because we have to check our calendars first. And when your calendar gets too full, what can get squeezed out is your relationship with God if you aren't careful. That's where a Rule of Life comes in. **You see a Rule of Life is a schedule and set of practices a person adopts to create space in a busy world so that he or she can be with and become more like Jesus. A Rule of Life is a specific, working document that is also flexible. The goal is for it to be life-giving. That's why it includes rest and exercise and family rhythms. That's why it's also not just about adding to one's calendar but also about subtracting when needed.** For example, could you use a social media sabbatical? Is there something in your life that is eating up your time but isn't productive or something that is making you angry, anxious, or distant? What might it look like to intentionally let that stuff go and focus more on your relationship with God?

Because Rules of Life include sets of practices in addition to schedules, I'd recommend that a Rule of Life be organized around at least 4 practices – corporate worship, Christian formation, service, and thankful generosity. That's why I'd encourage you to think about all the things we have planned for the fall through one of these lenses. Corporate Worship, of course, would include Sunday morning, but it can also include choir practice or depending on what you're singing, even singing in the car. Church is a great place to worship God, of course, but it isn't the only one. Corporate worship does mean that you aren't worshipping alone, though. Make sure that you are worshipping God with other people. Christian formation can include online Bible studies, Sunday School, Wednesday night activities, listening to podcasts, reading your Bible and journaling, having a quiet time or devotion time, etc. Christian formation also includes fellowship with other believers. Service could be volunteering at one of our

local mission partners, helping with an ongoing mission project like serving at Sharing Christ Worship Center, or working with our Children's and/or Youth Ministries. There are all sorts of ways you can serve. And thankful generosity, well, that's giving of your time, talent, and treasure. We already discuss stewardship every October, but ideally, stewardship is connected to thankfulness. We give; we are generous because it is a way to express our thanksgiving to God. I want to encourage you to join me in putting together a Rule of Life this fall. And I'd like for you to view the events we have planned as a church through that lens. If you do, you'll see that they aren't just extra things to put on your calendar, but events designed to help you draw closer to God.

As for events this month, there are a few I want to bring to your attention. **First, we'll have Family Breakfast on Sunday, August 3 at 9 AM in Rosser Hall. Then, later that day in worship, we'll take communion together. On Wednesday, August 6, we'll resume our Wednesday Night Activities. And then on Thursday, August 7, I'll resume the online Bible study that I've done for the past year. On Sunday, August 10, we'll meet like normal for Sunday School and then join the good folks at Lee Street Baptist Church for worship as they celebrate their 160th anniversary. Then, on Sunday, August 24, I'm going to be starting a new sermon series entitled "Being Prophetic in the Present." We're going to be working our way through the book of Jeremiah. It's a sermon series that I'm looking forward to, and I hope that you will as well.**

Finally, I want to let you know about something we're going to be working on more this Fall and that's using the technology we already have in new ways to try to reach more people. There are two specific things you'll see. First, we're going to record some brief video announcements for upcoming events. These will be shown on Sunday mornings before worship, but we'll also be able to post them (and you will be able to share them) on social media. Additionally, I'm going to try my hand at a podcast. Admittedly, I have no idea how it will turn out, but we've got to continue to look for new ways to reach people with the Gospel, and this is an attempt to do just that. Consequently, you'll be hearing more about these in the coming months. In the meantime, however, invite someone to join you at church the old fashioned way. Both you and they will be glad that you did. As always, it is a joy to be your pastor.

Grace and Peace,

Kris

BREAKFAST!!

**Sunday, August 3, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

Rosser Hall

There will be a full or partial breakfast
available at no charge.
fellowship before heading off to
Sunday School.

the
BENEVOLENCE
offering

August 31, 2025

WEDNESDAY

**NIGHT
ACTIVITIES**

RESUME

August 6, 2025

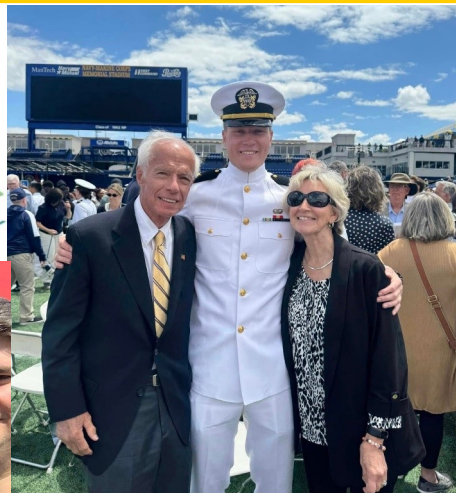
Wednesday Evenings:

**Prayer Meeting
Dinner
Youth
Bible Study
Choir Practice**

**5:30 p.m.
5:45 - 6:15 p.m.
6:15 - 7:30 p.m.
6:15 - 7:00 p.m.
7:00 p.m.**



Thanks for your generous support of our
School Supplies Collection,
benefitting students and teachers in Bristol's public schools.



First Baptist Church of Bristol Staff

Dr. Kris Aaron.....Senior Pastor
 Rev. Ben Ondrak.....Associate Pastor
 Mrs. Jackie Burnette.....Pianist
 Mrs. Andrea PenningtonOrganist

Ms. Marcine Robinette.....Parish Nurse
 Mrs. Emma Vance.....Ministry Asst. for Children
 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 August

August 3	Eldon Wilson
August 10	Dena Cunningham
August 17	Harry Scanlan
August 24	Nelson Gwaltney
August 31	Gene Eller

August FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

August 02 & 03	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
August 09 & 10	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
August 16 & 17	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
August 23 & 24	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
August 30 & 31	Terri Thomas	(423) 963-7576