



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

July 2021

First Baptist Family,

Even though it's not over, it's already been a busy summer! We had a great turnout for our Church-Wide Ice Cream Chill-Off. It was good just to spend time in fellowship and eat a meal together after over a year apart. Just that time together was an indicator that things are slowly beginning to feel normal again. Vacation Bible School was a huge success in large part to Ben, Jackie, and our fantastic volunteers. Our Youth recently returned from their Mission Trip to Wafloy Christian Retreat Center, and it was successful as well. We've also hosted the Mount Rogers Health District for a Mobile COVID vaccination clinic in the church parking lot. And we've been inspired by the Podgaiskys and the Hearnese when we learned more about their work in Kiev, Ukraine and Danville, Virginia, respectively. June has been a good, full month. It was filled with good ministry, good missions work, and good fellowship. And while not quite as full as June, July looks to bring more of the same.

While we will be taking a break from Adult Bible Study on Wednesday nights this month, there will still be something for everyone. Our Children and Youth will continue with more of their summer activities. **Our children will be having a Kids' Day at Sugar Hollow Park on July 27. And our youth will be going to Unidiversity Camp July 20-24. We will also have another church-wide event this month. This time it will be a drive-in movie on Friday, July 30.** You'll hear more details about this event as it gets closer. Then, after this month is over, we'll begin to shift gears and prepare for the Fall, which also looks to be exciting. Good things are happening at First Baptist Bristol! I want to encourage you to not only join us for these events yourself, but I want to encourage you to bring a friend or two with you. These events will be enriched by your presence and theirs, so I hope you can make it.

A few weeks back, I got an email from Dave Stancil that I think is worth sharing with you. As most of you know, Dave is a former pastor of First Baptist Bristol, and he and his wife, Jill, moved back to this area a few months ago. What you may not know is that since Dave and Jill moved to Abingdon, he and I have met for lunch once a month. We have struck up a warm friendship that I have found to be both personally and professionally beneficial. I've enjoyed getting to know him better, and he has graciously allowed me to pick his brain more than a time or two. He's even graciously agreed to preach for me while I'm on vacation on Sunday, July 18. This particular email, though, wasn't about finalizing a meeting time for lunch or worship on July 18 or other information that friends share with one another through email. Rather, it contained a link to an article about S curves. And while I was previously familiar with S-curves from math and science classes, I'd never thought of them in terms of ministry. I found

this article especially informative. As the author of the article notes, "S curves are sneaky. Early on, they look flat, and we think they will never grow. After they reach the tipping point, they look like an exponential curve and people might think they will never stop growing. As they slow down, we think it's the end of an S curve, forgetting a new one might be around the corner. S curves make us miss the forest for the trees."

That can sound a lot like our relationship with God, can't it? We think nothing is happening, and then all the sudden, these huge, illuminating, miraculous type things can happen all at once. And then, they can seemingly stop just as quickly. When that happens, it feels as if things are over. S curves also happen in the life of churches. Things will seemingly be stagnant. It feels like it doesn't matter what we do because nothing seems to change or take flight. But then all of the sudden, things can just take off! God will show up in a mighty way, and we're off to the races. Then things slow down and seemingly come to a stop. And it feels like things are over. What's important for us to remember, however, is that nothing never happens. Something is always going on. God is always at work around us and through us. And the way we get beyond what feels like stagnation spiritually, mentally, numerically, professionally, etc. is to keep our heads down and keep doing the work we believe God is calling us to do.

None of us, myself included, can predict when exponential growth is going to occur. Only God knows that. All we can do is to continue to be faithful and keep doing the work. The events we have planned for this summer, the work being done by the Long Range Planning Team, the activities we have planned for the fall - all of them are our attempts to be faithful and to keep doing the work. And that's why I want to encourage you to get involved in them. Many hands make light work, and who knows? Your participation may cause your faith journey to enter into a stage of exponential growth. Your invitation to a friend may cause that growth in his or her life. Both the Spirit and S curves can work in mysterious ways, but people are most likely to experience the blessing and growth that come from them when they're open to it. It's my prayer both for you and for this church that we will keep doing the work, that we will continue to be faithful, that we will continue to be open to the Spirit's leading. Because if we are, we will see what God is doing around us. And we will be motivated; we will be inspired; and whether it be numerically or spiritually or personally, we will grow from that encounter.

As always, it is a joy to be your pastor.

Grace and Peace,
Kris



**Church-Wide
Drive-in Movie!
July 30
Details announced later
in the month.**



Library Lines

New to our fiction collection is *The Water Keeper* by Charles Martin. Murphy Shepherd is a man with many secrets. He lives alone on an island, tending the grounds of a church with no parishioners, and he's dedicated his life to rescuing those in peril. But as he mourns the loss of his mentor and friend, Murphy himself may be more lost than he realizes. When he pulls a beautiful woman named Summer out of Florida's Intracoastal Waterway, his mission to lay his mentor to rest at the end of the world takes a dangerous turn. Drawn to Summer, and desperate to find her missing daughter, Murphy is pulled deeper and deeper into the dark and dangerous world of modern-day slavery. With help from some unexpected new friends, including a faithful Labrador he plucked from the ocean and an ex-convict named Clay, Murphy must race against the clock to locate the girl before he is consumed by the secrets of his past—and the ghosts who tried to bury them. *The Water Keeper* is at once a tender love story and a heartrending search for freedom. ~May Tabor



**Father's Day
Photo Booth!**



(proposed changes are written in red)
FBC PROPOSED BYLAW CHANGES:
(July 25, 2021 Business Meeting)
Section 6 - Trustees

Section 6 – Trustees

The Board of Trustees are to be nominated and elected, to serve a five-year term, **with one member of the board rotating off every year. A Trustee must rotate off one year before accepting a nomination to serve another five-year term.**

If a vacancy occurs, the Ministry Team will nominate a new candidate at the earliest scheduled church business meeting. When elected, the nominee will begin service immediately.

The Mission Team is sponsoring a drive-by food donation for the Blessing Box on Sunday, July 11 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. The Team decided that now that it is easier to get out, we could depend more on the congregation to supply the food. The Team will continue to stock the Box with the donated food. Please do not bring perishable items and limit sweets. Drinks are especially appreciated. Thanks to those of you who have been contributing regularly.
~Bev Bowers

FBC Youth Ministry



The 2021 Youth Mission Team



POOL Party

July 28

5:30 (cook-out)

Ends 8:00 p.m.

Middlebrook Clubhouse

76 Kingsbridge

Bristol, TN 47620

CAMP:

"University" 2021

Maryville College,

Maryville TN

July 20-24

If anyone is still interested in going,
it is not too late to register to go.

See Ben for details.

MUSIC News

Notes From Leigh...

I'm not sure how to adequately express my love and appreciation for Rob and Kim Griswell-Lowry and Louise Crusenberry. These three faithful choir members moved away from Bristol to be closer with family. It has been a blessing and a joy to serve alongside them. They will be missed!!

Thank you to all the men who sang in our Father's Day men's choir-it was a huge success! We probably won't wait for a special occasion to do this again!!

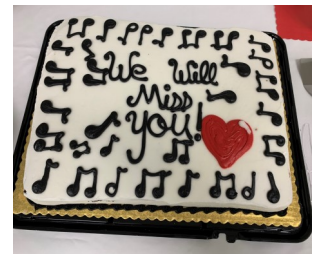
Also, I am grateful to Jackie for her incredible work leading our children in the VBS music-they were awesome!

Finally, let me also thank Andrea Pennington for her contributions to worship through her piano music-she is so talented. I am grateful for her willingness to share her talents with the congregation!



The sanctuary choir is taking a break from Wednesday rehearsals during July. We are not taking a break from leading in worship, though. So, if you'd like to sing with the choir, meet me in the choir room on Sunday mornings at 10:35 for a brief rehearsal! Everyone is welcome!

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



Contact Information:
Church Phone: (276)669-8191
Fax: (276)669-5082
Hours: info@fbcbristol.org
Website: www.fbcbristol.org



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

125 Sedgefield Street
Bristol, VA 24201

Deacon of the Week for July:

July 4, 2021	Roberta Yowell
July 11, 2021	Preston McMurray
July 18, 2021	Terri Cook
July 25, 2021	Jordan Pennington

FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

July 3-4: Dr. Kris Aaron (803) 225-0795
July 10-11: Dr. Kris Aaron (803) 225-0795
July 17-18: Rev. Ben Ondrak (423) 217-8934
July 24-25: Dr. Kris Aaron (803) 225-0795