



125 Sedgefield Street  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

## THE FIRST WORD

December 2024

First Baptist Family,

December marks the beginning of Advent this year, and it promises to be an incredibly busy month. Because of that, I want to highlight several of the events we have planned. **It all starts with our first Sunday in Advent, Sunday, December 1. That Sunday we'll have our abbreviated Hanging of the Greens service, where we will explain the meaning behind many of our beautiful decorations. On Wednesday, December 4, adults will finish up Wednesday Night Bible studies. Then, on Thursday, December 5, the cities of Bristol are having their annual Christmas parade, and the church is having a float this year! If you would like to help decorate or ride on the float, please see Ben and/or Emma. Sunday, December 8, we'll have our choir cantata. And after worship on the 8<sup>th</sup>, we'll have our Annual Business Meeting in which we will vote on and hopefully approve the 2025 budget and the slate of leaders who will begin to serve next year. On Sunday, December 15, we'll have another Advent worship service, and then that evening we'll have our Kidz Christmas Program at 5:15 PM and our Annual Christmas Dinner to follow at 6 PM. Since someone has generously covered the cost of the meal, all you have to do is let the church office know that you are coming. On Wednesday, December 18, Clary and I are hosting our annual drop-in reception at our house from 6-8 PM. Since it's for the entire church, all of you are invited. We will have plenty of finger foods and Christmas goodies, so I hope that you can make it. And if you need directions, please let me know. On Sunday, December 22, we'll have our fourth Advent worship service, and then on Tuesday, December 24, we will have our Christmas Eve candlelight and communion service at 5:30 PM. On Sunday, December 29, we will have worship, but we will NOT be having Sunday School that morning. Then, after a few weeks of reprieve, Wednesday Night activities will resume on Wednesday, January 8.**

Like I said, December is going to be an incredibly busy month! And I'm sure that all of you will have plenty of other events and activities to fill up your calendars this month just like I do. That's why I want to encourage you

to pause and catch your breath amid all the hustle and bustle whenever you can. Since it's become an annual tradition, I want to share with you again my favorite quote about Advent. It comes from Frederick Buechner, who writes, "In the silence of a midwinter dusk there is far off in the deeps of it somewhere a sound so faint that for all you can tell it may be only the sound of silence itself. You hold your breath to listen. You walk up the steps to the front door. The empty windows at either side of it tell you nothing, or almost nothing. For a second you catch a whiff in the air of some fragrance that reminds you of a place you've never been and a time you have no words for. You are aware of the beating of your heart. The extraordinary thing that is about to happen is matched only by the extraordinary moment just before it happens. Advent is the name of that moment." My dear brothers and sisters, I encourage you to pay attention to what is peaceful and holy about this season. Don't allow busyness to cause you to miss it. Listen for the groan of bleak midwinter, and hear it turn into joyous celebration as Christmas comes. I believe that all the events we have scheduled will help you do just that, so join us and bring others with you. It might be the only time that they and you have to stop and experience the divine. It might be the only time that they and you have to experience the holy and be reminded of what this season is really all about. So, take advantage of it, please. I promise that you'll be glad that you did. Merry Christmas!

Grace and Peace,

Kris



**Sunday, December 01, 2024**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent - The Lighting of the Hope Candle  
Special Music by Liam Horne, Bagpipes

**9:00 a.m.**  
Breakfast-Rosser Hall

**11:00 a.m.**  
Hanging of the Greens Service

**Sunday, December 8, 2024**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent- The Lighting of the Peace Candle

**11:00 a.m.**  
Christmas Cantata

**12:00 p.m.**  
Annual Business Meeting

**Sunday, December 15, 2024**

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent- The Lighting of the Joy Candle

**11:00 a.m.**  
Worship  
Special Music by the Hand Bells

**5:15 p.m.**  
Kidz Christmas Program

**6:00 p.m.**  
Christmas Meal

**Wednesday, December 18, 2024**

**6:00 - 8:00 p.m.**

Christmas Drop-In Reception At Kris and Clary's

**Sunday, December 22, 2024**

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent- The Lighting of the Love Candle  
Special Music by Appalachian Clarinet Ensemble

**11:00 a.m.**  
Worship

**Tuesday, December 24, 2024**

**5:30 p.m.**

Christmas Eve Service  
Worship and Communion

**Wednesday, December 25, 2024**

Merry Christmas!

**Sunday, December 29, 2024**

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas  
No Sunday School

**Wednesday, January 01, 2024**

Happy New Year!

**Tuesday, December 24 - Thursday, December 26**  
**Wednesday, January 01, 2024**

\*The church office will be closed for the Holidays.



We are filled with gratitude as we extend our heartfelt thanks to Jeff and Jackie Burnette for their generous sponsorship of our Annual Christmas Dinner!

Join us on Sunday, December 15, 2024 at 6 p.m. immediately following the children's Christmas play for a time of good food and fellowship. The membership team is excited to host this event, and we invite each of you to be a part of this special occasion.

***Christmas Dinner Menu:*** Mississippi pot roast with gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, coleslaw, rolls, and dessert.

## Year-End Giving

**In compliance with the IRS, the following options allow contributions to be counted for your 2024 tax purposes:**

- All contributions received during Sunday services thru December 29, 2024
- All contributions hand-delivered to the church office by 1 pm. on December 31, 2024
- All contributions **post marked** (NOT meter-dated) by December 31, 2024.
- All online giving with a **gift date** up to December 31, 2024.

Please plan to get your gifts in as early as possible to allow adequate time to address any posting issues. Any contribution received after December 31, 2024 or online gift dates after December 31, 2025 will be treated as a 2025 gift.



If you would like to place a poinsettia in the sanctuary during the Christmas season, please fill in the information below and return to the church office. Cost of each poinsettia is \$15. The deadline to order a poinsettia is Friday, December 13, 2024.

**In memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In honor of:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Given by:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsored by The Chancel Committee**

## Notes... from Leigh

And just like that...it's Advent!

The Advent/Christmas season is always so busy – preparations, gifts to purchase, parties, family time, travel, special services and events at church and school. It can really be overwhelming.

In our “Why This Jubilee?” study, we spent time discussing family traditions, favorite Carols, and the main characters of the Christmas story. We learned some new insights and perspectives on the Christmas story - from the place of Jesus’ birth to the men of the story, the mother and the Child. The birth and gift of Jesus was and is a complete miracle! For me it was wonderful to have the study before Advent. I believe I will be more mindful of the words in the Carols and to be more intentional about how/when/why I celebrate.

The choir has been working diligently to prepare our Christmas Cantata. They, along with some instrumentalists, will present “Silent Night, Holy Night” on December 8 during the 11 o’clock worship service. The anthems and narration are intended to provoke reflection and wonder at the precious gift of Jesus Christ. I hope and pray that you will be in attendance for this special service. And I hope you will consider who you might invite to attend with you!

### Other important musical dates for the Advent season:

December 01: 11:00 am Liam Horne, bagpipes in worship

December 15: 11:00 am Hand bells in worship

5:15 pm Kidz Christmas program

6:00 pm Annual Christmas Dinner

December 22: 11:00 am Appalachian Clarinet Ensemble

December 24: 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Communion Service

Merry Christmas!

Leigh

Just published and new to our Library is **The Lion Speaks: Studies in the Gospel of Mark** by former First Baptist Church pastor, David Stancil, Ph.D. Scholars speculate that Mark was the first gospel to be written. It was written to Christians in Rome most likely between 55 and 65 CE. This book is not a commentary or an exposition of every verse though it moves through Mark in an orderly sequence. It is a compilation of fifty-six sermons, each only 9 or 10 pages in length, that were delivered in an effort to instruct and encourage people as they explored the many topics addressed by the First Gospel. You may find it, as I have, very enjoyable and less scholarly than the title suggests.



**Sunday, December 01, 2024**

**9:00 a.m.**

Family Breakfast  
Rosser Hall

There will be a full or partial breakfast available at no charge.

So, come and enjoy a meal and some fellowship before heading off to Sunday School.



The church's  
**Annual Business Meeting**  
will be held on

**Sunday, December 8, 2024**

**Immediately Following Worship**

The agenda for that meeting as required in our Church's By-Laws is to adopt the 2025 Budget, to elect church officers for 2025, and to receive a report from the Ministry Team relative to Team membership, etc.



**KIND DEEDS CAN CHANGE LIVES.  
COLD WEATHER IS HERE.**

The caps, gloves, and socks are very much appreciated by the people in our area trying to keep warm.

You can bring warm items to the church office.


Gently used or new -which ever you have to donate.  
Thank you for your thoughtfulness to our community.

## 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

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



**Contact Information:**  
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**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 December

December 01	Darin Denton
December 08	Gene Eller
December 15	David Hicks
December 22	Nancy Hyde
December 29	Linda Pruner

### December FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

Nov. 30 & Dec 01	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
December 08 & 09	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
December 14 & 15	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
December 22 & 23	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
December 28 & 29	Terri Thomas	(423) 963-7576