



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

May 2025

First Baptist Family,

you. You'll be glad that you did.

It's hard to believe that it's already May! This year is flying by, and now it is almost Summer. We've had a great year thus far, especially last month as we celebrated Easter together. I remain excited as we move forward, however, because this month is also shaping up to be a wonderful month in the life of the church. In fact, we have several events planned for this month that I want to bring to your attention.

First, on Sunday, May 4, we're going to have our monthly family breakfast at 9 AM in Rosser Hall. Chef Harold will be busy in the kitchen, so come enjoy a good meal and better fellowship before heading off to Sunday School. **That day in worship we'll also take communion together.** Then, on Sunday, May 11, we'll not only celebrate Mother's Day by honoring the mothers and mother-like figures in the church, but we'll be celebrating our Children's Ministry as well. **That Sunday will be our Children's Sunday.** Many of you will remember that we've done this the past two years when our children have led us in worship. **Emma Vance will be preaching that Sunday.** So, I know that you'll want to be here to support Emma and our children. And let's be honest, momma would want you in church that Sunday, too. **Sunday, May 18 also promises to be a special day in the life of the church as we will ordain Adrienne Osborne to Gospel Ministry in worship that day.** As many of you know, Adrienne is a seminary student. What you may not know, however, is that she is interested in chaplaincy work, and ordination is a logical next step for her with these vocational goals. It has been an awfully long time since the church has ordained someone to Gospel Ministry, so it promises to be a special day not only for Adrienne but for the church as well. You don't want to miss it. **Also, this month I'll be resuming FBB 101.** We'll meet for 3 weeks during the Sunday School hour in Rosser Hall on May 4, 11, and 18. If you are a new member, a frequent visitor, or if you're a long time member who would like to learn more about the church, I invite you to join me as we look at what it means to be Baptist and the kind of Baptists we are here at FBB, the organization and structure of the church, and ways in which you can get more involved in the life of the church. Then, finally, on Sunday, May 25 we will have our Graduate Recognition Service. Ben will be preaching in this service. If you know of someone who is graduating, please let Terri and/or Niki know in the church office. **We don't want anyone to be forgotten about or overlooked.** As you can see, May promises to be a good, full month in the life of the church, and you won't want to miss everything that's happening. So, bring yourself and bring someone with

Finally, I wanted to share a little bit about an event I attended recently. The event was about this Dinner Church movement, and it was sponsored by the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV). While the information about this Dinner Church movement was interesting, what I found most interested was actually a quote from the main presenters - a pastor couple from Seattle. After talking about a multi-year period of church decline, the husband said that he and his wife met with the leadership of the church, and they began to have some difficult but much needed conversations. **He said, "We realized that we were in the church business. We were in the programs business, in the building and property business, but that God is in the rescue business and that we needed to return to the family business. For us to return to the family business, however, we realized that we needed to think about things differently. We had to change the questions we asked ourselves. And for us, that changed everything."**

Frequently, I will mention programming events the church has planned. I'll encourage you to come yourself and to bring someone with you - not only have I already done that in this column, but I do it in practically every First Word article I write. **What I'm realizing, however, is that I've not done a good enough job in connecting what we do as a church to God's larger rescue mission.** The purpose of our programs and events is to introduce people or re-introduce people to the God of the universe. The reason we have a building isn't for ourselves, but so that we have a space to honor and worship God. Our various mission emphases, they aren't just to make people feel good about themselves - they are to give people opportunities to be Christ's hands and feet out in the world. The church isn't a building; it's a people. You and I, we are the church, and we need to shift the way we think about things. We need to think less about doing church and more about being church, realizing that we have the opportunity to partner with God in God's rescue mission. So, I want to encourage you not to think of the events we have planned this month as just one more thing to put on your to-do list, but to think of them as events that will empower you to join in God's rescue work. Sometimes a new perspective is exactly what we need in order to see just how much God is at work amongst us.

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

Grace and Peace,
Kris



YOUTH MISSION TRIP

May 30-June 06, 2025

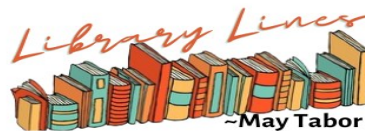
1. THE COST IS \$175 OR 17.5 COMMUNITY HOURS.
2. ALL MEMBERS OF THE MISSION TEAM ARE COMMITTED TO TRAINING FOR OUR WORK SIGHT. TRAINING TBA.
3. YOU WILL NEED AN ADDITIONAL \$35 FOR ONE FREE-DAY ACTIVITY AND \$35 FOR MEALS THAT WE WILL EAT OUT AND ON THE ROAD

YOUTH CAMP 2025 UNIDIVERSITY TO MARYVILLE COLLEGE July 7-11

1. COMMITMENT TO COME, PAY OR WORK FOR \$200 TOWARD THE COST.
2. COMMITMENT TO WORK AT THE FUNDRAISER.
3. WILLINGNESS TO FOLLOW ALL RULES.
4. FILL OUT AND SIGN A CAMP COVENANT.

To register: Turn in registration, \$100, and Medical Release for 2025.

Graduate
Recognition
Sunday is
Sunday, May 25.
Be sure to join us as
we recognize those
who have graduated
from High School and
College.



If you don't judge a book by its cover, there's a little well-worn book in the library that you might enjoy—*Appalachian Shepherd: a story of religion in the Southern Appalachians* by Garland Hendricks. It is one of several books developed through the concern and enthusiasm of Dr. W. D. Weatherford, President of Southern Appalachian Studies. Dr. Hendricks tells the story of a local minister among mountain people and how he faced the challenges and lifted an entire community without outside assistance. It is a tribute to A. Frank Andrews who was the greatest blessing any community could have. His story is told in hopes it may inspire others to participate in sacrificial service to rural people whose needs are great and challenging.

Notes from Leigh...

What an incredible Easter season! The Holy Week worship experiences were especially meaningful to me this year. I would like to especially recognize and thank Nevaeh Ondrak and Elayna Makres for their part in the Good Friday service. They approached their role as “cross bearers” for the stations of the cross thoughtfully and respectfully and it was noticeable. I appreciate and I am grateful for the active role of our youth in the life of the church; they are definitely breathing life into this place. I pray that you are all paying attention and expressing your appreciation to them and for them every chance that you get!

Most, if not all, will know by the time First Word is published that I have announced my retirement from ministry. I have served churches in a part-time or full-time capacity for 28 years. God has richly blessed me. My time with you here at Bristol has been especially affirming. Mark and I know that we are loved and appreciated; we hope that you know that we feel the same for all of you.

Finally, two things: First, mark your calendar for May 4 at 6:00 pm and plan to join me at Euclid Avenue Baptist Church for a Hand Bell Concert. I will be a part of their choir for the program. Holly Martin (who plays with our Hand Bells) is also a part of that group. Second, stay tuned for ways that you can once again “go” on mission with us to Folly Beach. Everyone can’t go physically, but we can all be involved spiritually and maybe even financially. More about this soon.

Blessings and love,

Leigh

Let's Celebrate Leigh Clark's Ministry

Sunday, June 8, 2025
12 p.m.

Make plans to attend a retirement luncheon for Leigh after worship on June 8, 2025. FBB will provide the meal. It will be a great time of fellowship as we say good bye to special folks, Mark and Leigh Clark.

FBB 101:

**May 4, 11, & 18, 2025
9:45 a.m.**

If you're a new member, regular visitor, or would like to learn more about what it means to be a Baptist, the structure and organization of the church and/or would like to know how to get more involved, join Kris in Rosser Hall during the Sunday School hour.

BREAKFAST!!

**Sunday, May 4, 2025
9:00 a.m.**

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.

Children's Sunday and Mother's Day:

Sunday, May 11, 2025

Not only will we be celebrating Mother's Day on May 11, but our children will help lead us in worship! Please be here as we honor the mothers and mother-like figures in the church and as we celebrate our children. Emma Vance will be preaching.

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 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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Website: www.fbcbristol.org
 You can also find us on
 Facebook.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

125 Sedgefield Street
 Bristol, VA 24201

Deacon of the Week for May

May 04	Gene Eller
May 11	Terri Cook
May 18	Roberta Yowell
May 25	Leigh Gleib

May FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

May 03 & 04	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
May 10 & 11	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
May 17 & 18	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
May 24 & 25	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795