



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

May 2023

First Baptist Family,

It's hard to believe that it's already May! This Spring has flown by and now Summer is almost upon us. We've had a good and busy year thus far. We walked the Lenten journey together. We've signed covenants to support missionaries. We've hosted lectures, concerts, and symposiums to raise awareness about homelessness. We've celebrated Holy Week and Easter. Our Children have led us in worship. We've had book studies and Bible studies so that we might learn more and draw closer to God. We've eaten together, fellowshiped together, and worshipped together. In short, we've been the church to one another, and we've sought to be the church to those in this community. While we've had lots of faithful members sick this year and our attendance has been impacted by it, we're continuing to see more and more visitors. And those visitors are becoming regular attenders themselves. All that to say, we've had a great start to 2023, and I expect things to continue going well this month.

On Sunday, May 7 we'll have communion. Then, on Sunday, May 14, we'll celebrate the mothers and mother-like figures in the church. If you aren't sure what you're going to get the mothers and mother-like figures in your life, might I suggest going to church with them. That's always a good place to start. Then, Sunday, May 21 will be a big Sunday in the life of the church. That Sunday we'll be recognizing our graduates, so if you are graduating from high school or college, please let Ben know. And that Sunday, the Podgaiskys are also going to be joining us. They're going to update us on their work in Ukraine and what that work has looked like considered the past year has been marred by war. We'll be signing an Encourager Church Covenant with them just like we did with the Hearnese back in March. That Sunday is also when our teams are going to meet. Because so much is happening that Sunday and we want to give everyone ample time, we're going to have a churchwide breakfast during the Sunday School hour. We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall and breakfast will start at 9:15 AM. During the Sunday School hour, Gennady and Mina will be able to share more about what the last year has looked like for them and their ministry. Then, during worship, we'll cele-

brate our graduates, sign the Encourager Church Covenant, and hear a little more from Gennady and Mina during the time of the sermon. Then, after all of that, our teams will meet as needed. So, May 21 will be an incredibly busy Sunday, and it's one that I hope you'll be here for.

As summer gets closer and the weather warms up, people are firming up their vacation plans and they're tempted to spend some more time at the lake. I want to encourage you, though, to be faithful in your attendance on Sunday morning and Wednesday night. The fact is we regularly have special things in worship, things you don't want to miss. But even when we don't, our worship services are strong. The music, while being varied, is always excellent. And I'd like to think the preaching isn't half bad either. Our programming is strong, too. We're doing wonderful things with our children and youth. People have multiple options to choose from for discipleship groups. We're giving people the opportunity to serve in a variety of ways. We are doing church exceptionally well! I am admittedly biased, but I think we have stronger worship services and better programming than churches significantly larger than we are. They have more people than we do currently, but that would change if all our members were in church regularly. That would change if we had an ethos of invitation where members regularly invited their friends and neighbors to join them on Sunday mornings. And the only people who can do anything about that are you. We're doing great things here at First Baptist Bristol, things people should be proud of and want to be here for. So, I want to encourage you to join us and to bring your friends with you. I know that you'll be glad you did.

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

Grace and Peace,

Kris

Youth activities

Youth Mission Trip 2023 – June 10-17 to Charleston, South Carolina. We are working with Sea Island Habitat for Humanity building a home for a family in need!!! It's a wonderful trip working hard to provide a home for a family! Oh, and we will go to the beach and do some fun stuff too! Total cost for a student to go is \$150 or 15 hours of work for FBC Volunteer local missions and fundraising. Participants will need to train by volunteering at our local Habitat for Humanity.

Days and dates are to be determined.

July 10-14 Youth Camp Unidiversity Theme "Where Is God?" Registration is required by May 10 and the cost is \$220.

To Register - \$50 of total cost will reserve a spot. All Youth are invited to work fundraisers to offset their costs. Registration is open now. Contact Ben, fill out information sheet and either pay \$50 to register or work for registration cost.



Vacation Bible School 2023 will be Wednesday, June 21 through Saturday, June 24 at 6 p.m.

Emma Vance is our VBS director and is looking for volunteers for all areas! Contact Ben or Emma at FBC!



Mother's Day

All women will be honored on May 14, 2023.

Plan to join us in celebrating the women in our lives.

The family of Wanda Gibson would like to thank our FBC family for the prayers, calls, cards and visits received during Mother's hospital stay and Home going. Your love and support was greatly appreciated.

Lesla and Amanda

We can't thank you enough for all your prayers, cards, and letters. We miss you and enjoy keeping up with all the church activities and how God is working in Bristol. Since Tom is at risk of falling, his doctor recommended that we move to assisted living, and we found a lovely place in Richmond, Kentucky.

Our new address is Tom and Sara Parker, [Morning Pointe Assisted Living](#)
1400 Gibson Bay Drive Apt. 121
Richmond, KY 40475



Sunday, May 21, 2023



We will honoring any FBC family members who are graduating from high school or college. If you or someone in your family would like to be recognized, please call the church office.

NOTES

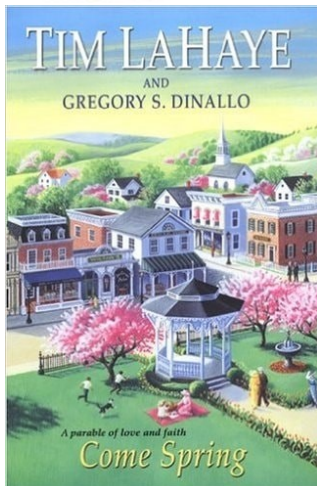
from Leigh

Being the Minister of Music at FBC Bristol brings me so much joy! I enjoy standing before you each week to lead the music and other aspects of worship. I especially enjoy the smiling faces looking back at me as we sing – it’s a small thing, but it means so much. And each week as I stand at the back of the sanctuary greeting people, I receive encouragement, thoughtful praise for the music, hugs, and smiles. It is a wonderful feeling – thank you!

Over the past year, I have also taken on leading a small group book study on Wednesday nights. It’s not part of my job, but teaching/leading/facilitating is something that I love to do. We have studied several books and we are adding new people to the group every session. The book we are studying now is called, “Same Kind of Different as Me”. The book was made into a major motion picture several years ago. The subject matter hits pretty close to home with our recent emphasis on the unsheltered population in the Bristol area. I believe it is a book you would enjoy reading even if you’re unable to come to the study sessions.

Finally, due to the short time frame, I wasn’t able to get enough commitments to move forward with the adult mission trip. However, the plan is to try again for next year. I ask that you be in prayer about the opportunity to “Go and Serve”. There will be an interest meeting in the fall to discuss the possibilities, set some tentative dates, etc. Stay tuned!!

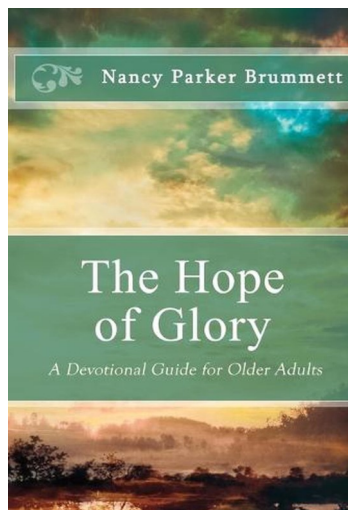
Blessings,
Leigh



Come Spring by noted author Tim LaHaye and Gregory Dinallo is a small, easy-to-read parable of love and faith. Dylan Cooper has begun a new life hoping to achieve recognition for his photography as works of art. Photography is his calling and only love until Grace, working at a Boston gallery, comes into his life. She has faith in his talent and determination to succeed and their

friendship develops into a love that neither expected. But Dylan's creative gift may tear them apart unless faith and hope can bring them back together.

Bible Study



A new Bible study is beginning May 4, 2023 at Brookdale Assisted Living at 1:00 pm. We will be using **The Hope of Glory** by Nancy Parker Brummett. We will meet every Thursday.

If you are interested in helping or just joining us, please contact Susan Banks - 252.649.4706. They are very excited. God is good!

