



**1 VIRGINIA STREET  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201**

## THE FIRST WORD

**October 2020**

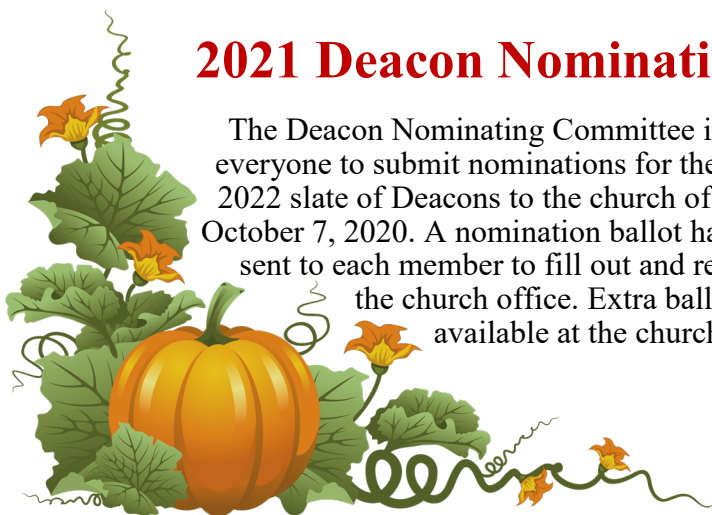
First Baptist Family,

The initial adrenaline all of us had at the beginning of this pandemic is now gone. This has turned into a tough slog. We're weary and worn out. People wonder how much longer this is going to take and when things are going to be able to return to normal. And unfortunately, I don't have the answers to those questions any more than you do. All of the stress this disruption has brought has caused people to act in ways they normally wouldn't. Things just feel off-kilter. I've sat in on numerous Zoom calls with clergy groups over the last few months both to get ideas during this time in which we're apart and for my own personal self-care. As I've listened to friends and colleagues share their experiences, I've been both shocked and thankful. I've been shocked to hear an increasing number of friends openly contemplate leaving the ministry and leaving the church altogether. These are people I know to be excellent ministers, people who are good at what they do, thoughtful, kind, faithful Christians, you name it. They're contemplating such drastic life changes because of how polarized their churches are right now because of the pandemic. Church members at these places have not just disagreed with one another respectfully; they've acted out of character, issued ultimatums, and have left burning bridges and burning their ministers on the way out the door. My friends are tired of the fighting and the blame they've received over things they can't control. This is an especially difficult time to do ministry. It's easy to get discouraged. In addition to feeling shocked, though, I've also felt thankful. I've felt thankful because my experience here has been so different. I've felt thankful for all of you, how supportive you've been, how encouraging you've been to me and all the staff. I've also been thankful that we've been able to disagree respectfully with one another. Tragically, that is becoming a lost art. Like me, I know all of you have opinions concerning this pandemic, and I know some of you wish we were handling things differently as a congregation. I get that. Because we're in uncharted territory, this whole ordeal feels like trying to build a plane mid-flight and praying it doesn't crash. There are going to be some understandable differences of opinion in how to put the plane together. I'm thankful, though, that we all share the same goal and have the same desire – for the church to succeed, grow, and come out stronger on the other side of this virus. And I am immensely thankful that people haven't been issuing ultimatums, burning bridges, or burning our ministerial staff. We have

stayed united as a congregation, in large part I think, because we've been praying together.

I read an article about clergy burnout during this pandemic a few days ago. The author made several excellent points, but there was one particular quote that stuck out. She wrote, "Honest to God, I've never seen clergy so uniformly depressed, hopeless and feeling so unsupported. Multiple friends are making plans to leave parishes, despite not knowing where they will go. And I think I know the biggest reason why. We've turned church away from a place dedicated to creating disciples to a place for consumers. We've led those who attend to believe that the church is a place for them to get their desires met, not a place for them to hear the Gospel, bear one another's burdens, and serve." The author's solution to this problem was for people to pray. Specifically, she encouraged people to pray before they complain. That's great advice! We have been praying together since the beginning of August. Every Sunday we've prayed for a united spirit and a bold faith. And in the month of October, we're going to begin praying for missionaries that are connected to the church. We're also going to pray for teachers, students, and each public school in Bristol, Tennessee and Bristol, Virginia by name (clergy are far from the only ones suffering from burnout, so are teachers, students, and their families along with many others). We're going to continue to pray and I'm convinced that we're going to stay united as a congregation as we do. You're also going to have the opportunity to serve as well. Soon, we're going to be nominating people to serve as deacons. Our Ministry Team is going to start approaching people to serve on the various teams and committees of the church. What makes the church the church is people worshiping together, serving together, and doing life together under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And what makes First Baptist Bristol First Baptist Bristol is the people here who choose to do those things together. I want to encourage you to keep up the good work. Keep praying. Keep serving. Keep worshiping. Keep bearing the burdens of one another and extending grace and mercy to one another, especially right now. God knows, we all need it. Keep remembering that our goals are the same and that we're all doing this under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Because if we do, I'm convinced that we'll not only grow spiritually but that we'll grow numerically as well.

Grace and Peace,  
Kris



## 2021 Deacon Nominations

The Deacon Nominating Committee invites everyone to submit nominations for the 2020-2022 slate of Deacons to the church office by October 7, 2020. A nomination ballot has been sent to each member to fill out and return to the church office. Extra ballots are available at the church office.

## Zoom Video Conferencing

- Board of Admin. Meeting  
- 12 OCT, 5 p.m.
- Deacons' Meeting  
- 19 OCT, 7 p.m.
- Business Meeting  
- 25 OCT, 12 p.m.
- Sunday School  
- Sundays 10 a.m.
- Monday Morning Coffee Klatsch  
- Mondays, 10 a.m.
- Prayer Meeting  
- Wednesdays, 6 p.m.
- Choir Practice  
- Wednesdays, 7 p.m.

## Notes From Leigh

Just a few weeks ago my parents celebrated a huge milestone – 60 years of marriage – 60 years! Wow! My sisters and I planned a drive-by celebration in the town where my dad serves as the Minister to Senior Adults. He and my mom have not been to church since March. Basically, they have been with family and only gone to essential places – mainly the Dr. They have, understandably, felt isolated and out of touch with the church. They watch worship online, get cards from people and dad spends hours each week on the phone doing ministry, but still, they miss their church family. So, it was exciting to see nearly 50 cars and well over 100 people, drive by to wish them Happy Anniversary! People decorated their cars with posters and balloons; they had cards

and gifts; they blew their horns and hollered... Oh My Gosh, the smiles and tears that were shared. My dad kept saying, "It's good to see somebody LIVE"! And it was. After the parade, we enjoyed a family meal and some fellowship. Dad's brothers and sister and others sent videos wishing them a wonderful day of celebration. It was an amazing day to celebrate two of the most wonderful people I know.

Not only are they wonderful as a couple because of their example of marriage and love and Christianity. They are also wonderful as individuals with their own gifts and personalities, as well. I am blessed, along with my sisters, to be their daughter.

My parents are so grateful for the congregation at FBC Bristol. Your

prayers and cards and your love for Mark and I have endeared you to them! I look forward to the day – hopefully soon – when they will make the trip to Bristol to meet all of you in person!

Blessings,  
Leigh



As many of you know, my Mom, Wilma Kistner, had a wonderful friend and companion for her last years. Thomas Rudder is a WWII veteran and lives alone in California. He will be 98 years old on OCTOBER 6. Due to the pandemic, he will not be able to visit us for his birthday as he has in the past. If you can, please send him a birthday card for his special day

- Lana Stubbs

# Happy BIRTHDAY

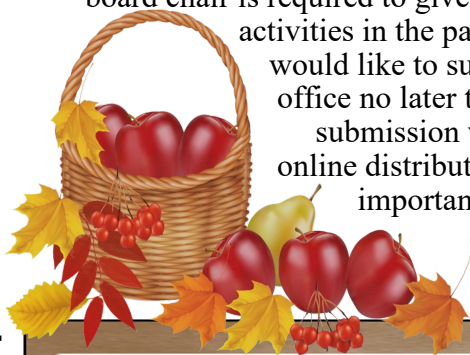
**Thomas Rudder**  
6340 Aslin Way,  
Carmichael, CA,  
95608





# QUARTERLY Business MEETING

Our Quarterly Business Meeting will be held via Zoom on October 25, 2020 immediately following the 11 a.m. service. As per the Church's by-laws, any team or board chair is required to give a quarterly written or oral, report on the group's activities in the past four months. If you are a board or team chair and would like to submit a written report, please send a copy to the church office no later than 4 p.m., Thursday, October 22th, 2020. On time submission will allow the office staff to compile the reports for online distribution. The information in these reports is especially important for this meeting as it will help keep our parishioners aware of church activities despite having to remain physically distant.



Welcome ✓  
Little  
One

Congratulations to staff member Kaitlyn Courtney on the arrival of her new little girl, Sadie Jane.

Both Sadie Jane and Kaitlyn are healthy and happy. We hope to see both Kaitlyn and Sadie Jane soon!

## YOUTH MINISTRY

FBC Youth and Children are back in school and negotiating the new world in which they live. Several are working online with teachers while some can meet at school. Continue to pray for our young people, parents, teachers, and leaders making hard decisions. This Summer several of our young folks volunteered to work at the food pantry to help feed local folks. This is

just one example of our "Do Good Now" work. Thank you for praying for our young people! We will keep looking for opportunities to make God's love for us into action.

Parents of Children! We are working on getting a couple of resources to you that will help you encourage and grow with your children. The resources are

Sunday School and missions learning materials that you can do with your children any time of the week!

"Together at Home" <https://www.tath.co.uk/> is the Sunday School material and "Spark" <https://cbf.net/download/31679/> is the missions materials. Take a look parents and let me know what you think!

-Ben



CHURCH

# Library

**City of Peace** by Henry G. Brinton, FBC Library's most recent addition, is a gripping mystery that engages the reader politically and spiritually, leaving him/her with fresh insight into overcoming polarizing divisions among people of differing cultures and faiths. When Methodist minister Harley Camden loses his wife and daughter in a European terrorist attack, he spirals downward into grief and anger. The bishop forces him to move to a tiny church in small-town Occoquan, Virginia to heal and recover. But all hope for serenity is quickly shattered by the mysterious murder of the daughter of the local Iraqi baker. Harley works to build bridges to his neighbors, including Muslims and Coptic Christians. He uses his experiences, when as a student he worked on a dig in ancient Galilee, to find the secret to survival in a fractured and violent world. Past and present come together in surprising ways as Harley sets out to stop the violence and save his new flock.

## 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  
 Mr. Rob Lowry- Griswell-----Organist

Ms. Kaitlyn Courtney-----Sexton  
 Mr. Dennis Thomas-----Sexton  
 Mrs. Marcine Robinette-----Parish Nurse  
 Ms. Terri Thomas -----Church Administrator  
 and Financial Secretary  
 Ms. Sydney Campbell-----Administrative Assistant



**Contact Information:**  
Church Phone: (276)669-8191  
Fax: (276)669-5082  
Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
E-mail: info@fbcbristol.org  
Website: www.fbcbristol.org



### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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 Bristol, VA 24203



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#### FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

October 3-4: Dr. Kris Aaron - (803) 225-0795  
 October 10-11: Rev. Ben Ondrak - (423) 217-8934  
 October 17-18 Dr. Kris Aaron - (803) 225-0795  
 October 24-25: Dr. Kris Aaron - (803) 225-0795  
 October 31—Nov.1: Dr. Kris Aaron- (803) 225-0795

#### Deacon of the Week for October:

October 4- Tom Makres  
 October 11- Steve Talbert  
 October 18—Bob Love  
 October 25- Gene Eller