



1 VIRGINIA STREET  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

## THE FIRST WORD

May 2020

First Baptist Family,

One of the things I've wondered about constantly over the last few weeks is what lessons we're learning from this pandemic. While we're all ready for things to return to "normal", the fact is they won't. Some things will return to normal, but we will inevitably create a new normal based on the lessons we've learned during this time of physical distancing. And that new normal will affect how we do church together. Because of that, I've tried to think through and been in conversation with the church staff and others about the issues that I think will affect us most moving forward. The topic that keeps coming up is how technology can affect worship and community.

The past few weeks have shown that technology is no substitute for meeting in person to either create community or worship corporately. That being said, I'm not blind to the fact that we could not have worship right now without taking advantage of the technology at our disposal. The church staff has done an excellent job with this. Ben has served as our resident audio and video expert. With a huge assist from Joey, he has been the one recording and editing our worship services, so we can post them online. Leigh has been leading choir practice via Zoom. Terri and LaVerne have done invaluable administrative work to keep all of us straight. We're currently having Sunday School, Wednesday Night Bible Study, and Church Business Meetings all on Zoom. Leaning on this technology has shown us some of the strengths and some of the limitations that we currently have as a church regarding our technological capabilities. For example, we would be sunk without our new website, church Facebook page, and church YouTube account. Those three are not only allowing us to reach church members, but they are allowing us to reach significantly more people than we were previously. On Facebook alone, we have averaged approximately 720 views a week. And that doesn't take into account the number of views we've had on our YouTube channel or on the website, so the average number of weekly views is actually higher. For reference, we average a little under 125 people a week in person for worship. And while some of those views are from family members who live out of town, none of our families are that big! You can see that we are reaching significantly more people than we were before. Those are people who could be hearing the Gospel for the first time, people who could make professions of faith, people who could become active church members who give faithfully of their time, talents, and treasure. We need to think about and plan for a way for us to continue to stream our services once we're able to meet together in person. That is something that we currently do not have the capabilities to do.

I imagine that Zoom will continue to be a viable option for some Sunday School classes and for Bible Study options moving forward, particularly for those who are traveling or for those who are physically unable to attend. This forced shift has not been without struggles, though. I know many of you have been unable to access our services online. As a staff, we've discussed the need for a church Tech Team that specifically works with church members who have struggled with these changes. Medical experts are warning that there could be another wave of COVID cases in the Fall/Winter, which would mean having to move things back online again after meeting in person. Making sure more of our members can access things is important, and that means incorporating technology into how we do church is here to stay. It also means that we need to be thoughtful and strategic in how we purchase and implement new technologies, realizing that changes and updates will need to be made in stages rather than all at once. Times are indeed changing, but God does not. And we can find comfort in that.

Grace and Peace,  
Kris

## FBC Business Meeting

To all 2020 Team or Board Chairs

FBC Business Meeting scheduled for May 17 to vote on repairs for the water running into the coal chute.

Gene Eller, Church Moderator

## Online ZOOM Meetings

Board of Administration Meeting on May 11 at 5 p.m.

FBC Business Meeting on May 17 at 12 p.m.

Deacons' Meeting on May 18 at 7 p.m.

Sunday School (weekly) at 10 a.m.

Wednesday Night Bible Study (weekly) at 6 p.m.

Wednesday Choir Rehearsal (weekly) at 7 p.m.



It's difficult to promote a closed library, so I'll offer some of my quarantine strategies. The Book of Books is in each of our homes. There are many passages we've read but, in light of today's situation, may hold a new and more relevant meaning. Psalm 91 is familiar but its consolation is timeless: "You

will not fear the terror by night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday... I will be with him in trouble." Many of us have a Kindle or Nook and there are endless possibilities with these devices including, for the visually challenged reader, the ability to change the font size. Quite often free e-books are offered through online merchants. Our library has a Kindle Paper White loaded with a variety of great books.

Borrowing it is a way to see if you'd like to have one of your own. Let me or a church staff member know if you'd like to try it. Perhaps you, as I, have a library of favorite books in your home. Revisiting an old favorite can be like visiting an old friend, and you'll likely be surprised to discover things you missed on an earlier reading. I'm not sure what the new normal will look like, but the library will always be open and church members may browse and self-checkout materials at any time.



## Notes from Leigh...

I would like to extend a word of thanks to the many people who have helped make our virtual worship services so meaningful over the past weeks.

I must begin with Jackie Burnette. Her faithfulness is matched perfectly with her talent. She is willing and able to

help out with the music ministry any way possible - from preparing special music for the piano, meeting with soloists to record and for continuing to help me with choir rehearsals - she is a wonderful asset to our church and to God's Kingdom.

I would also like to recognize those who have prepared and shared special music: David Hicks, Jordan Pennington, Andrea Pennington, Nevaeh and Ben Ondrak, and Mark Clark. We have also been blessed during our virtual services to have my friend, Susan

Mullins, on the organ. She and Jackie have collaborated to produce some beautiful organ/piano duets.

You are not seeing the choir during worship, but know that they are diligently and faithfully preparing music for our return to gathered worship. We rehearse each Wednesday at 7 and would welcome you to join us anytime!!

Continue to pray for our church, our ministries and all of our leaders!

Blessings and Love,  
Leigh

## FBC SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

One of the big needs in our community during this time of pandemic is directly related to food insecurity. Because of that, we are working on putting together service teams that will allow people to serve their neighbors in socially responsible ways. Some of these opportunities to serve include:

**-Food Pantry:** Currently, the food pantry in the Ministry Mall is open on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1-4 p.m. Several churches are providing volunteer teams. This is currently one of our more pressing needs. If you are interested in volunteering at the food pantry as part of the First Baptist team, please contact Kris Aaron at 803-225-0795.

**-Meals on Wheels:** First Baptist delivers meals through the Meals on Wheels program on the fourth Thursday of every month. If you would like more information about helping with Meals on Wheels, please contact Stephanie Elliott at 423-646-7280.

**-Weekly Soup Delivery:** First Baptist delivers soup to shut-ins weekly. If you are interested in delivering soup and would like more information, please contact Leroy Doran at 423-612-4204.

**-Blessing Box:** Jerry Sorrell is building a Blessing Box for the church. It will be placed by the tree where we currently tie hats and gloves in the winter. The Blessing Box is a place to put canned goods and hygiene prod-

ucts for those in need. Once the box is in place, the church will be notified and members will be encouraged to keep our box stocked to help our neighbors. If you have questions, please contact Kris Aaron at 803-225-0795.

Being mindful of our own individual health and loving our neighbors are not mutually exclusive. We can practice physical distancing, wash our hands, exercise good judgment regarding our health, and continue to fulfill our mission as a church. People remember who was there for them in a time of crisis, and this pandemic provides us a wonderful opportunity to be the hands and feet of Christ in our own community. As different opportunities arise, I'll be sure to let you know. Stay well.



We extend congratulations to **Davy and Rachel Wilson**. They had their baby girl yesterday. Her name is **Katherine Marie**, she weighed 7 lbs 15 oz. Mother and baby are doing well. Dave and Judy Wilson are the proud grandparents and Kate is baby sister to Reese and Clara.



### Love in Action

As unusual as these times are, we have resources that allow us to act from love instead of fear.

When we wash our hands and wear masks, it is a loving act of service to those around us. When we close schools and work from home, we're actively reducing the spread of a disease that can kill people even if we don't know who they are. When practicing social distancing to prevent transmitting illness, we can still greet someone with a warm look or hand over the heart as a gesture of affection. Placing canned food, toiletries, and masks in the Blessing Box helps local residents meet basic needs.

Citizens of a small town organized a car parade around the local nursing home to wave at the residents who could not have visitors. The principal and coach of a small high school drove a school bus to the homes of graduating seniors to deliver yard signs, caps, and gowns. Residents of apartment buildings in New York stood on their balconies to sing to help each other feel less lonely.

This is love in action.



### Look out for boat waves!

If you have ever paddled a canoe on the lake, you know that sometimes a motorboat can come by and cause a wake which will unsettle your canoe. In our world, we have unprecedented turbulence coming at us on a daily basis like waves. Each passing swell threatens to tip our stability. It's up to us to decide if we ride the waves or let

them swamp us. We can persevere if we're willing to practice new skills.

Just as the paddle provides balance when things feel unstable, you have tools to use for balance. Here are some of the tools that you can use while you are "sheltering in place."

1. Make a schedule and include a 30-minute worry time. Don't worry at any other time.
2. Each day write down three things for which you are thankful.
3. Do a breathing exercise or meditation.

## Youth News

### TENTATIVE Calendar Events!

**Graduate Recognition Sunday on May 17.**

**Vacation Bible School on June 7-10** for First Baptist Bristol kids and community.

**Youth/Adult Mission Trip to Mission, TX on June 13-20.** We will be helping a family in Mission, Texas to get into a home and sponsoring a 4-day VBS at a local church. Required registration, \$50, medical release form, and 9-hr fundraiser work and train hours towards cost of trip.

**First Baptist Bristol Picnic on June 28.**

**Terrific Tuesdays on June 30 and July 14.**

**Youth Summer Camp - "Uni-diversity 2020" July 20-25** at the Maryville College in Knoxville. Registration fee of \$50 and another \$125 balance (due by June 25) as long as they participate in 8 hours of church service to members of the community. Set up your service times through Ben at 423-217-8934 any time between now and camp trip. If anyone needs to help with registration or balance payment, this can be worked out. Let Ben know! If a student chooses to not work 8 hours of church service to offset their cost of camp, they will be responsible for paying the \$365 cost of camp to Uni-diversity. *(FBC never wants a youth to be restricted from participation because of financial commitments.)* **To Register by website or phone:** Registration is open now until March 15 with a \$50 deposit. After March 15 The cost of registration goes up \$35 to include a late fee.

The candle burning this morning is in memory of

**Jean Hembree Lewis**

April 29, 1930 - April 25, 2020



A private graveside service is planned for Jean Lewis. At a later date, a memorial service to honor the life of Jean will be planned. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to First Baptist Church -Bristol, #1 Virginia St, Bristol, VA 24201 or to a charity of your choice.

4. Put boundaries around the news. For example, no online news after 8 p.m.

5. Look for stories of kindness.

6. Connect with others. Phone, use Zoom, or call family members or friends.

7. Practice faith. Pray for strength in weakness, - For courage in fear - For hope in hopelessness - For joy in despair. Faith lifts us up, quiets our fears, and gives us hope and joy.

8. If you can't spend time in nature, take a virtual tour of a National Park or a local museum.

## *Our Staff*

Dr. Kris Aaron  
Rev. Ben Ondrak  
Mrs. Jackie Burnette  
Rev. Leigh Clark

Senior Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Pianist  
Minister of Music

Mr. Dennis Thomas  
Mrs. Marcine Robinette  
Ms. Terri Thomas  
  
Ms. LaVerne Brown

Sexton  
Parish Nurse  
Church Administrator  
and Financial Secretary  
Administrative Assistant



**Church Phone : 276.669.8191**

Fax: 276.669.5082

Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

E-mail: [info@fbcbristol.org](mailto:info@fbcbristol.org)

Website: [www.fbcbristol.org](http://www.fbcbristol.org)

### **FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**

1 Virginia Street  
P.O. Box 116  
Bristol, VA 24203



#### **FBC Minister On-Call Schedule**

May 2 - 3	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795
May 9 -10	Rev. Ben Ondrak, 423-217-8934
May 16 - 17	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795
May 23 - 24	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795
May 30 - 31	Ms. Terri Thomas, 423-963-7576

#### **Deacon of the Week for April**

May 3 - Roberta Yowell  
May 10 - Mary Amburn-Bowman  
May 17 - Leroy Doran  
May 24 - Jeff Burnette  
May 31 - Michael Warren