



1 VIRGINIA STREET  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

## THE FIRST WORD

July 2020

First Baptist Family,

Time flies when you're having fun. It's hard to believe that I've had the pleasure of serving as your pastor for eighteen months now! Every six months or so, I like to engage in a sort of personal internal check-up. And in those check-ups, I try to re-examine my to-do-list while also spending time reflecting on what I've been able to accomplish. I engage in some self-reflection to try to honestly assess what I've done well and what I still need to work on. The eighteen-month mark means that I'm engaging in my own internal check-up, but I think it's important for us as a congregation to engage in a similar practice. There is still plenty for us to do as a congregation, but that will be saved for another time. Instead, I'd like to focus on all that we've accomplished together in the last year and a half.

The fact is we've done a lot together over the last eighteen months, and we do ourselves a disservice if we don't occasionally go back to reflect on it. Most importantly, looking back on what we've done and how God has led us gives us the encouragement we need to know that God is still leading us now and into the future. I think such encouragement is especially needed during a time of pandemic in which so many of us are apart. So, here is a brief, non-exhaustive list of some of the things we've accomplished together in the last year and a half: Started a College Ministry, started offering Bible study options for young adults and young families, established a permanent nursery, renovated a new room to serve as our prayer room (special kudos go to Nancy Hyde for this one), updated the sound system in the sanctuary, updated the church logo, built a new church website, updated our church software management program, increased our online presence as a church, began live-streaming our worship services, started new mission projects to the homeless and the poor with our Blessings Box and phone charging station, repaired the coal chute, replaced the roof on the breezeway, repaired the brick work on the front porch, and hired new staff members. And we've done several of these things in the middle of a pandemic! God has been active and on the move here at First Baptist Bristol. Our attendance, when you add both those attending in-person services with online engagement, has been good. And our giving has been surprisingly strong. God has blessed us as a congregation because we've been faithful. So, keep up the good work! We have a lot more to do together, and I can't wait to see how God is going to continue to lead us in the future.

Grace and Peace,  
Kris



First Baptist Bristol Church readers,  
The latest addition to our library's  
Historical Fiction collection is *Memories of*

*Glass* by Melanie Dobson, author of *Catching the Wind* recently donated by Carolyn Harris. In 1942 as war rips through the heart of Holland, childhood friends, Josie and Eliese, partner with a few daring citizens to rescue Eliese's son and hundreds of other Jewish children. Amid their resistance work, however, their dangerous secrets could derail their friendship and

mission. And 75 years later, Ava Drake is led to discover that her great grandfather was not the WWII hero he claimed to be and the connection between her family and Landon West's Ugandan coffee plantation. In this rich and inspiring novel, Dobson transports the reader through time and place to illuminate the story and strength of these women.



### Notes from Leigh...

It is so wonderful to worship together once again – even with the limitations imposed on us all by the ongoing Pandemic. It is also a blessing to have the technological capabilities to stream our service to those who are not able to attend in person.

I have been exceptionally pleased with the faithfulness of the choir. We have been rehearsing virtually via Zoom since March, and our weekly attendance has remained strong. On June 28 we sang together (wearing masks) a beautiful anthem entitled, "If My People Will Pray" based on 2 Chronicles 7:14. (I encourage you to visit the website and listen to the service if you missed it!)

If you are interested in singing in the

choir or singing a solo, please reach out to me! I would love to get you involved in the music ministry! Our rehearsals for choir will be each Sunday immediately following worship for 15-20 minutes.



So, last month I gave you a brief rundown on the Clark family. This month, as promised, I will tell you a little more about Mark. Mark is a PK (preacher's kid) and a TK (teacher's kid). Yep! He and his three brothers grew up with a lot of church and a lot of school! His growing up years were in NC and GA. Mark is the second child. His older brother, Curtis, is a Pastor. His next brother, Paul, is a professor. Baby brother, Harold, is a missionary. Mark's mom died several years ago. His dad, Dr. Dale Clark, is retired from ministry and resides in Hickory, NC, with his wife, Helen.

Mark received his bachelor's degree in History from Baylor University in Waco, TX, where he was a student-athlete on the

Track team. He went to UGA for his master's degree (where our paths crossed!) and PhD. He was hired as a Professor of History by Clinch Valley College – now UVA -Wise – in 1997. He teaches European History.

By far, Mark is the smartest person I have ever known – and not just as a historian. He loves to learn about everything! He speaks multiple languages and reads constantly, and he is an especially good Bible scholar. He is a wonderful singer and cook, and he also is a gardener and beekeeper. Most of all, he is an incredible husband and father.

I am the one who is always "out front" in worship. But, please know that Mark is my supporter and encourager and sounding board and everything else. He is the very best part of us!

Hope you are all staying safe. Look forward to seeing you soon.

Blessings and Love,  
Leigh

### A Note from the Finance Office

As we embark on the second half of the year and maneuver through a pandemic, I thought an update on our financial situation would be helpful and appreciated. In April 2020, the church applied for and received \$43,800 from the CARES Act through the Payroll Protection Program. This amount covered payroll expenses and utilities for an approximate two-month time frame. Monies were spent in accordance with PPP guidelines, and these funds will be forgiven without penalty or interest.

As of the end of June 2020, giving to date is actually above last year's giving, and giving is above the budget as of the end of June. This demonstrates the faithfulness of you—First Baptist members and friends.

The church staff has been mindful of spending during this time. We have had reductions to budget line items due to canceled plans, changed programming, and careful management of our expenses. Currently, we have a surplus of \$26,000 actual spending to budget spending.

As we forge through the second half of 2020, we will continue to manage in the same manner as we have since January. God has been faithful to so many during this time. First Baptist will continue to be faithful in our service to those in our own community as well as to those we reach out to globally.



Our **Quarterly Business Meeting** will be held for discussions and voting on repairing gutters and breezeway issues on Sunday, July 26 at 12:00 p.m. via ZOOM .

Join the Zoom meeting by clicking on this link and entering meeting ID and password below:

<https://zoom.us/j/858704477?pwd=STVDUFFHK0ZrYXJWJTU5POGxQMjFzZz09>

**Meeting ID: 858 704 477**

**Password: 045544**

One tap mobile

+16468769923,,858704477# US (New York)

+13126266799,,858704477# US (Chicago)

+1 646 876 9923 US (New York) +1 253 215 8782 US  
 +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago) +1 301 715 8592 US  
 +1 408 638 0968 US (San Jose) +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)  
 +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) or Find your local number:

<https://zoom.us/j/858704477> Meeting ID: 858 704 477

According to our church's by-laws, chairs of teams and boards are asked to give a quarterly report of the group's activities. The report can be emailed to [terri@fbcbristol.org](mailto:terri@fbcbristol.org). Please submit the report no later than **Wednesday, July 22**. The information you share will be helpful in keeping the membership informed of what is happening in our church.

Congratulations to **Lexi Dock** on the birth of her daughter, **Aspen Reece**. Aspen was born approximately 5:40 pm, Thursday, June 18. She weighed 7lbs, 11 oz. and is 21 inches long. Lexi and baby are doing great!

**Online ZOOM Meetings**  
 Board of Administration Meeting on July 20 at 5 p.m.  
 Deacons' Meeting on July 20 at 7 p.m.  
 Quarterly Business Meeting on July 26 at 12 p.m.  
 Sunday School (weekly) at 9:30 a.m.  
 Monday Morning Coffee Klatsch (weekly) at 10 a.m.



**New Staff Member**

We are happy to announce that **Kaitlyn Courtney** has joined our staff as a part-time custodian. Kaitlyn began working early in June. She resides in Bristol and is expecting her first child in September. Please extend her a warm welcome to the First Baptist Bristol Staff!

**FBC Youth News!!!**

**Virtual Vacation Bible School**

- First Baptist Children's Ministry Announces First Ever Virtual VBS 2020  
 When: July 19-21  
 Where: At Home with Online Fun  
 Who: Children of all ages  
**To Register:** Go to our website [www.fbcbristol.org](http://www.fbcbristol.org) and click on the registration button.



**Welcome new members, Andrea and Jordan Pennington!**



Andrea and Jordan came forward to unite with First Baptist Bristol on Sunday, July 5. Though they are coming from First Presbyterian Church, both are returning to their Baptist roots. Jordan grew up here at First Baptist Bristol, and Andrea grew up in a Baptist church in North Carolina. Both have been sharing their musical talents with the choir and the church for several months and we're glad to now welcome them officially!

What does Virtual VBS Look Like?

- 1<sup>st</sup> We are creating our own "Bible Study Comes Alive" Videos and "Musical Fun with Jackie B" Videos for each of the three days of Vacation Bible School.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> We are delivering on Sunday, July 12, one week prior to VBS our "Box-0-Fun" including Crafts, Snacks, Materials, and maybe a couple of surprises! The delivery of the "Box-0-Fun" is by FBC VBS Parade!!! More info on this later.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> We will meet together online Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings at 7-7:20 p.m. for group fun and games. Please register by Wednesday, July 8.

**Youth Camp Alternate 2020**

- This is another project the youth ministry is taking head on!!! We are working on several possibilities that will adjust to our current world situation. Remember, the safety of our youth and families is our first concern, and we are praying and working through this Summer to re-create youth ministry.

## *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**

July 4 - 5	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795
July 11 -12	Rev. Ben Ondrak, 423-217-8934
July 18 - 19	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795
July 25- 26	Dr. Kris Aaron, 803-225-0795

#### **Deacon of the Week for July**

July 5 - Tom Makres  
July 12 - Preston McMurray  
July 19 - Terri Cook  
July 26 - Gene Eller