



125 Sedgefield Street
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

THE FIRST WORD

February 2024

First Baptist Family,

Typically, in February I share with you how we finished the previous financial year. Now, I wait until February because there's all sorts of end-of-the-year financial work that Terri has to finish. Since people can make donations as long as they are postmarked by 12/31, it can take a few days for everything to come in and for Terri to finish her work, and those few days are after our First Word deadline. So, in keeping with my tradition, I want to update you now, and I have good news to share. Before I do, though, I want to remind you of something. We increased our budget significantly in 2023, in large part because of how well we did in 2022. 2022 was the best giving year we have had in quite some time. If you'll remember, our giving exceeded our budget by \$9,385.03 in 2022, so we challenged ourselves as a congregation in 2023. And I'm happy to report that all of you stepped up in a big way! After being behind budget for most of the year, we had a fantastic giving month in December. It was one of the best giving months we've had in a long time. **Our budget for 2023 was \$495,000 and we took in \$488,640 for the year. We only came up \$6,360 or 1.28% short of meeting our budget, which given where we were at the start of December is remarkable! We followed up 2022, one of the best giving years we've had in recent memory, by taking in roughly \$20,000 more in 2023!** Thank you for your faithfulness in giving! And thank you for your continued presence in the life and work of the church! Good things are happening here at First Baptist Bristol - things worth inviting others to, things worth celebrating. I believe this is a testimony to the way God is at work in and through this church! God is blessing us as a congregation, and we are called to keep up the good work we've started.

Thankfully, February is going to be a month in which we can keep that good work going. There are lots of things we have scheduled for this month, and I can assure you - they are going to be things you will want to be here for. **First, on Saturday, February 3, we're going to host the community MLK event at 2 PM in the sanctuary.** If you'll remember, we were supposed to have that event on January 15, but the weather forced us to postpone it. The program and the guest speaker, Tybre Faw, will remain the same, however. I hope that you'll be able to join us for what should be a wonderful event. **Then, on Sunday, February 4, our very own Rev. Leigh Clark will be preaching.** Every year in either February or March, we celebrate what Baptist Women in Ministry (BWIM) used to call Martha Stearns Marshall Preaching Month. The event celebrates the ministerial giftedness of women, which is something we've been doing as a congregation for 70 years! I know that you'll want to be here

that Sunday to support and encourage Leigh. **Then, on Sunday, February 11, we'll take up our annual Souper Bowl of Caring offering at the end of worship.** This offering, collected by our youth, goes towards helping the benevolence requests of people in this community. February is also the start of Lent. **On Tuesday, February 13, we'll celebrate Fat Tuesday or Shrove Tuesday. Rather than our traditional pancake supper, however, we're going to be having a Seafood Boil! Please sign up with Niki in the church office to ensure that we have enough seafood and King Cake for everyone. Dinner will be at 6 PM** While there is no set cost for the meal, we are asking people to make a donation. All proceeds will go towards local missions. **Then, on Wednesday, February 14 at 6 PM, we'll have our Ash Wednesday service in the chapel.** This will be a solemn, powerful service that you will want to attend. **Please remember that we will not be having our regular Wednesday night meal that evening.**

During the latter part of February and early part of March, we're also going to be doing something new. **Clary and I will be leading a Marriage Enrichment Study. We'll be leading a study on *The Five Love Languages* by Gary Chapman. We'll meet in Rosser Hall from 3:00-4:30 PM on the following Sundays: February 18, February 25, March 3, and March 10. The deadline to sign up will be Wednesday, February 14. Childcare will also be provided. If you'd like a copy of the book, let Niki know when you sign up. The cost of the book is \$13.90. Please invite your friends to this, and if you have married adult children, let them know about this study, too.** We'd love for them to join us because stronger marriages and healthier families help people, whether they're members of this church or not.

Celebrating the ministerial giftedness of women, worshipping together, fellowshiping together, collecting money for local benevolence and missions, having studies to help strengthen marriages, all of that makes for a good, full month. They also help people become more healthy, holy, and whole, too, and that's our goal for this year. So, join us this month and invite others to join you. I know that you and they will be glad that you did.

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

Grace and Peace,

Kris

Adult Mission Trip

June 7-14, 2024
Folly Beach, SC



There will be a
brief interest meeting
after worship on
February 11, 2024.
Please see Leigh if you have any
questions.

Tuesday, Feb. 13 at 6:00 p.m.



FREE

***Donations will go
towards
local missions.**

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Mark your calendars!

February 03 at 2:00 p.m. - Community MLK Event

February 04 at 11:00 a.m. - Rev. Leigh Clark will be preaching for BWIM at FBB.

February 11 - Souper Bowl Caring Offering and Adult Mission Trip Interest Meeting

February 13 at 6:00 p.m. - Fat Tuesday Seafood Boil

February 14 at 6:00 p.m. - Ash Wednesday Service

February 18 & 25 and March 03 & 10 from 3-4:30 - Marriage Enrichment Study in Rosser Hall



Notes...from Leigh

Well, winter has arrived! The snow was beautiful; the frigid temperatures were just that – frigid! One thing I really enjoy about the winter weather is that it forces me to actually slow down. I can't just run to the store or do something in the yard, or _____. I spend more time under the blanket reading and thinking, more time at the piano, more time in conversation with Mark and family members, and more time with God. I also sense the stillness and peace of God; I can visibly see His Majesty. It is always good for my soul to slow down.

Our next church “season” also helps us to pause and reflect and remember God’s sacrifice and His love for us. February 14 is Ash Wednesday and the beginning of the season of Lent. I hope you will plan to join us for the special services that we will have during this season. Palm Sunday is March 24 and Easter is March 31.

February is also Women in Ministry month. Kris has once again asked me to preach on February 4 as a way to recognize the significance of FBB’s commitment to women in ministry for many decades. I ask for your prayers and for your presence.

I would also encourage you to consider joining a small group – the choir, a Sunday school class, a Wednesday night group, or another study group. There are a lot of options. Pray about it and then make a commitment!

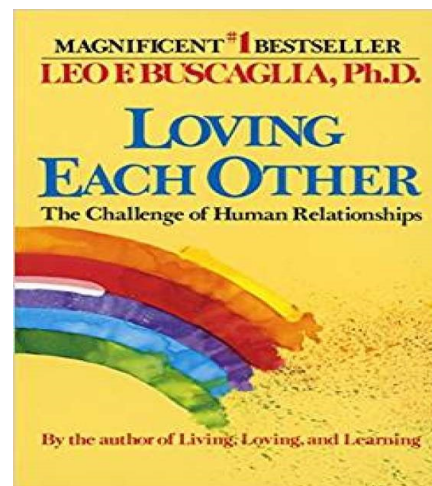
Finally, there is an opportunity for an adult mission trip to Folly Beach, SC the week of June 7-14. On February 11, we will have a brief interest meeting immediately following worship. If you are interested at all, please let me know. The cost will be minimal and there is some flexibility in the travel dates. I just need to know ASAP if there is enough interest to pursue the idea. Please pray about it!

Blessings,
Leigh



LOVE is the theme for February. Author, professor, lecturer, Leo Buscaglia wrote the book, *Loving Each Other: The Challenge of Human Relationships*,

which addresses the intricacies and challenges of relationships. How do we best structure our actions to interweave with those around us to have fulfilling lives? The author presents alternatives and suggests behaviors that ease our way into loving each other. He discusses the qualities of tenderness, honesty, forgiveness, and communication in marriage and in the wider world of family, friends, and acquaintances.




Your library has a long list of materials with love as the theme--romantic, familial, Christ-like, interpersonal/relational, child-like, etc. A computer search will give you many choices. Ask for assistance!

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
 Mr. Jacob Pensinger.....Sexton
 Mrs. Emma Vance.....Ministry Asst. for Children
 Ms. Terri Thomas Church Administrator
 and Financial Secretary
 Ms. Niki Judy..... Administrative Assistant



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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

125 Sedgefield Street
 Bristol, VA 24201

Deacon of the Week for February

February 04, 2024	Leigh Glei
February 11, 2024	Bob Love
February 18, 2024	Tom Makres
February 25, 2024	Susan Banks

February FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

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