



125 Sedgefield Street  
BRISTOL, VIRGINIA 24201

## THE FIRST WORD

November 2024

First Baptist Family,

After an incredibly busy October, November provides us with a bit of a reprieve. We slow down to catch our breaths and reflect on all that we have to be thankful for, but we also slow down because we know that December will be incredibly busy as well. Thus, we pace ourselves because we understand that life in the church, like a life of faith, is a marathon and not a sprint. Consequently, I have fewer things to update you on this month. Still, there are some things I want to bring to your attention.

**First, I want to remind you about Sunday, November 3. That Sunday we will have our All Saints' recognition. That is, we'll not only be serving communion in worship, but we will be recognizing the saints of the church who have gone on to glory within the last year.** This is always a somber and meaningful service, so I know that you will want to be here that Sunday. **Please note that we will NOT be having Family Breakfast on Sunday, November 3.** After just having the Staff Appreciation Luncheon the week before (and thank you again for that), we thought people might need a bit of a break. **Consequently, the next Family Breakfast will be on Sunday, December 1.**

**In addition to our All Saints' service, I also want to remind you about our prayer emphasis on unity. While it started in October, it continues all the way until Saturday, November 30.** I hope that you find the prayer calendar helpful and that you are joining me in prayer as we finish out the church calendar year. I've always found that a church that prays together and centers its prayers around the same themes is a church that grows closer together and grows spiritually. I hope that we find that to be the case again with us.

Finally, as you travel and get ready for Thanksgiving and as we as a church make our final preparations for the Advent season, I want to encourage you to think about all the things that you have to be thankful for this year. If you're like me, it doesn't take you long to realize that it's an awful lot. For example, I'm thankful for all of you. And I and the rest of the staff are very thankful for the Staff Appreciation Luncheon you put together. It was an incredibly kind gesture, and thanks to Harry (Chef Harold), we had a wonderful meal. I'm thankful for our church staff. They are all a pleasure to work with, and I'm grateful that God has called us to work together for God's

purposes in this time and in this place. I'm thankful for two precious children and a wonderful wife who has put up with me for over 15 years now. I could keep going, of course, and I'm sure you could, too. Still, it's good to take time and reflect on all the blessings that God has given us.

It reminds me of a brief conversation I had with someone recently. This person was telling me about how long they had known another person. Apparently, they had been friends since they were children, and the person added that they had hung out a lot when they were in high school. Then, the person added that he didn't realize how right his father had been and that his teenage years, when he was young and carefree, really were the best years of his life. I didn't comment. Instead, I just smiled and listened. I'm sure that you've probably heard something similar yourself. You might have even uttered those words yourself, but as I thought about that brief encounter, I've realized that I don't agree. Now, it probably won't surprise you to learn that I often think about things a little differently. But I've found that if I focus my thoughts too much on the past, if I idealize and romanticize the past to the point that what I "remember" wasn't actually real, if I remember only the good and forget the bad and the hard, or if I focus too much on the future and how if I can just get through whatever I'm currently experiencing so that I can arrive at some future state that will be "significantly better" (and I may even think that the future will be perfect), then I ignore or miss the good things that God is doing in the present. I ignore or miss the blessings that God is giving me now. And that, I believe, is a real tragedy. Consequently, I try to find things to be thankful for, things to enjoy regardless of the stage of life in which I find myself. Simply put, I try to enjoy and keep my feet grounded in the present, and this month I want to encourage you to do the same. When you think about all that you have to be thankful for, don't just look to the past and don't imagine the future either. Instead, be honest and really examine the present. Be where your feet are. Because I'm convinced that if you do, you'll see how God is moving all around you even more.

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

Grace and Peace,  
Kris



Fall Festival



## Notes... from Leigh

I love fall – the colors, the cooler temperatures, college football, Thanksgiving. I have so many wonderful memories of fall: from being a kid raking all the leaves for us just to go jump in the pile over and over again; to my Redcoat Band days at UGA where we would have to bundle up for our early game day rehearsals only to shed our uniforms after halftime because it was so hot; to gathering with family and friends for a bountiful meal at Thanksgiving. The downside of fall is the shortening of daylight which means exercising mostly indoors and going to bed earlier.

It is easy to skip right over November because there is so much to do in December. But I think the 40 Days of Prayer for Unity is really helping me stay focused on gratefulness and togetherness. I hope it is helping you as well. Advent and Christmas will come, and we will have plenty to do. But I hope this November we will count our blessings and live each day to the fullest giving our great and good God all the glory.

Blessings,

Leigh




## 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 Pennington .....Organist

Ms. Marcine Robinette.....Parish Nurse  
 Mrs. Emma Vance.....Ministry Asst. for Children  
 Ms. Terri Thomas ..... Church Administrator  
 and Financial Secretary  
 Ms. Niki Judy..... Administrative Assistant



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 You can also find us on  
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### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

125 Sedgefield Street  
 Bristol, VA 24201

### Deacon of the Week for October

November 3, 2024	Bob Love
November 10, 2024	Tom Makres
November 17, 2024	Terri Cook
November 24, 2024	David Crockett

### October FBC Minister On-Call Schedule

November 02 & 03	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
November 09 & 10	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795
November 16 & 17	Rev. Ben Ondrak	(423) 217-8934
November 23 & 24	Dr. Kris Aaron	(803) 225-0795