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LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD

Welcome to our brand-new *FBC Reflections* newsletter! In this publication, you'll have an opportunity to see what FBC has been up to in recent months. Read through these articles and get excited—and involved—with our church's mission and ministry.

To the left of this page, you'll see the contents: pages dedicated to the many different forms of ministry we have at FBC Martinsville. You'll get to catch up on any missed news, learn about newer ministries, and remember together with the church family the exciting moments of the last few months.

I encourage you to share this publication with friends and neighbors and let folks know that FBC Martinsville is truly *The Open Church*, as we called ourselves during the pandemic—our doors and our people are open, loving, and ready to worship, love, and serve together.

The pandemic certainly changed our modes of worship and service for many months, but in these refreshed days of re-gathering, so much has been happening!

From our continued online ministries (social media, email newsletters, video streaming, and Zoom), to our in-person gatherings for worship and study, to ongoing missions opportunities—large and small—we

have not let the challenges of the pandemic slow us down, but instead have used this time to intentionally connect by computer, phone, and mail.

We have also completed a ReShape process, helping us discern as a church family how we want to minister in the months to come. We voted to affirm the ReShape ministry plan in January and now have begun to implement the initiatives in it. You'll see our new mission mantra tagline above: "Live Faith, Be Love, Speak Hope," which the church found together was a succinct understanding of our mission.

We have growing young adult and children's ministries. We have outreach through action and donation alike. We are embracing new ways to use our facilities and our resources. This is an exciting time to be a part of ministry at First Baptist!

I hope this newsletter helps you and your family to reflect on all our church is doing in ministry together, to look back and look forward to all the ways we can serve and share in love together.

May we never lose sight of the many ways our church family can be a part of God's larger Kingdom work in the world!

By: Libby Grammer

Music Ministry



A VERY GOOD PLACE TO START

I am excited and enthusiastic about what I see and hear at FBC Martinsville. I am certain I'm starting something new in a very good place to start.

With that said, you might like to know a bit more about my thoughts on music and worship, so I'll share a few thoughts and stories with you. I'll start at the very beginning.

One of my earliest memories of church is from FBC Fairfield. I realized one Sunday morning that the same guy was always waving his arms and singing the loudest when we sang together. When the people in robes made such beautiful music, he turned around and waved at them. I loved the music at church very much, and I asked mom why he was always the one to wave.

Mom did a nice job keeping a straight face, and patiently explained what a minister of music was to me. When I understood, and realized this was his job, I had one thought and shared it with mom: "Wow...that has to be the BEST job in the whole world! I wish I could do that!"

It is a great thing when God gives us the desire of our hearts. I still think I have the best job in the whole world. Helping to lead people in worship, directing choirs, teaching children, each of these

holds great joy for me.

And I feel that it is important work as well. The songs of faith that we learn, starting in childhood, stay with us throughout our lives. They center our thoughts, give us encouragement, and challenge us to deeper relationship with God and each other. They give a shape and voice to our prayers, joys, and even our sorrows.



Because they hold so much meaning, and stay with us so strongly, I think it is important that the texts of our hymns and songs be chosen with thought, care and prayer. I will always strive to bring each of these in planning worship and choosing choir music to share.

In our hymns and songs, we unite heart, mind and spirit within ourselves and with each other as we join our thoughts and voices in singing praise to God. It is a unity I have found in no other activity.

As we unite in worship together, may we join heart, mind, and spirit together as the Body of Christ, raising our voices in song as we seek God's will, and are renewed by God's presence.

By: David Cameron

Worship



SEE YOU AT CHURCH!

Worship is at the heart of the church's mission and witness. It's so integral to the life of the church that when we say we're "going to church," what we most often mean is *attending a worship service*. Worshiping the God that made us and wants to be in relationship to us is one of the most important ways we can become more like Jesus.

Worship at First Baptist has always been a beautiful experience, and that has not changed in recent months. In fact, the beauty has been able to grow in new ways!



Though the pandemic kept us from in-person worship for a season, we are back, and you should be too!

We continue to offer a contemporary message among the traditions—new and old—we have in worship. We have worship in song, including congregational singing of songs related to the scriptures and message for the day, as well as musical selections from our Sanctuary Choir.

We have lay readers who bring scripture to life for us each week, allowing us to hear the words of the Bible in different voices.

We have a children's worship time that tells the story in age-appropriate ways for our children, often including a song we can all join in to sing.

And we have a team of dedicated volunteers sharing their gifts and time in the balcony, ensuring

our at-home (or ill) members can join in to worship online each Sunday. From the soundboard to the video camera to the computer, these volunteers are the reason so many who cannot come to church in-person continue to worship with us each week.

In addition to our online streaming worship, we also offer a DVD recording of the service to the residents at King's Grant retirement community, where our service is aired on Friday mornings on the internal channel for residents. We are also beginning to share in the worship service in the chapel at King's Grant again, as well as planning to offer communion for our residents regularly.

Don't miss worship—from season to season and service to service, God is teaching us, moving us, and keeping us close with God and one another.

By: Libby Grammer

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Handwritten notes on the whiteboard include:

- Luke 24:1-7
- Torah
- Prophets
- Writings
- Scriptures
- Jeremiah
- Amos
- Emmaus
- Tesus
- bread
- Herem
- aspora
- ivity
- of festiva

STUDYING THROUGH THE WEEK

Shortly after Rev. Nancy McDaniel joined our church staff, she began a Ladies' Bible Study that met for an hour each week. They shared prayer concerns, and read through the Bible – from Genesis to Revelation. When they reached Revelation, they started over at Genesis. Nancy offered commentary as needed.

After 20 years, Nancy accepted a call to pastor another church, and I was called to serve as Minister of Education here at First Baptist.

I continued the class, and I'm currently in my 22nd year as teacher. We meet for an hour on Thursdays beginning at 10:00 am, currently on Zoom.



Thursday morning Bible Study has been held on Zoom during the pandemic and continues to have that option, even as plans are made to move back in-person.

“Thursday Morning Bible study is the spiritual highlight of my week. I am not a Bible scholar, so I need help understanding some of the difficult passages of scripture. After we read aloud, Rev. John Fulcher always includes background information and ancient culture in our discussions. His knowledge and ability to help us understand and apply what we learn to our daily lives is invaluable. Come join us Thursday mornings at 10:00 on zoom. You will be glad you did!!”

-Martha Perdue

I have used Nancy's format, and eventually invited men to join us.

From time to time, we have had members from other churches participate as well. My approach is more academic than devotional, which the class tells me they enjoy. I also encourage discussion.

If you want an in depth study of scripture, you are always welcome to join us - in what is now the class's 42nd year. And believe me, we leave no stone unturned!

By: John Fulcher

Adult Sunday School



STUDYING TOGETHER ON SUNDAY

Adult Bible Study has a long tradition at First Baptist Church. It has always been a time of fellowship and exploration of the Bible. There was a time when we had many class groupings of men, women, and couples. Due to the Pandemic, we have had to make necessary adaptations. Our Adult Sunday School Classes were combined and conducted on Zoom.

“Sunday School is one of my favorite times of Sunday. It gives me an opportunity to ask questions and discuss my thoughts. We are blessed to have wonderful Sunday School Teachers.” -Ann Draper

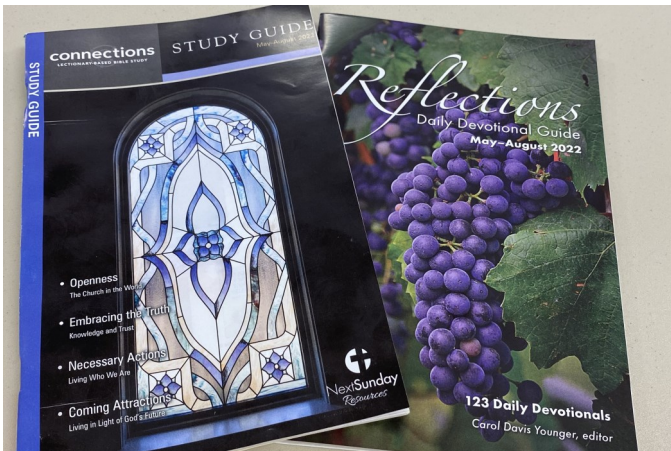
resumed in-person as one class that meets in Room 105/107 each Sunday beginning at 9:30 a.m., with a Zoom option for at-home members.

We are currently using a Study Guide entitled *Connections*, distributed by Smith and Helwys. It is a lectionary-based Bible study.

extraordinary teaching styles to each Sunday School lesson.

Our teachers go far beyond the provided Teacher's Guide and Commentary resources to help participants understand what the text means, when it was written, by whom and to whom it was written and why. This teaching outline assists members in realizing the relevance of the lesson and how it applies to their daily lives. Members of the class are encouraged to share their thoughts and explore how the lesson can impact each of us.

*By: Richard Dorr,
Sunday School Director*



New Shared Sunday School Curriculum

Although it was good to get together online, we missed the in-person connection that was an important part of the Bible study experience.

As the world reopens, our Adult Sunday School classes have

Our combined Adult Sunday School Class is taught by six outstanding teachers that bring different perspectives to the class study. Pam Burgess, John Fulcher, David Lewis, Dottie Lewis, Bill Sapp, and Roslyn Wingett bring their knowledge, study, and

“Our Sunday School Class offers an opportunity for a systematic approach to Bible Study. It is a vehicle for great open discussion and an opening of the heart and mind. It is a great tool for developing a closer relationship with God, through the Holy Spirit.” -David Lewis

Journey / Young Adults

SMALL GROUP



JOURNEY: IN OUR OWN WORDS

The Journey Small Group began as an online gathering during the pandemic for young adults looking to engage their faith in new ways.

Currently, the group studies the Bible using the FaithElement online curriculum that follows the church year, but we have also read meaningful books together and had discussions about various world events from a faith perspective.

the laid-back atmosphere of the Journey group and being able to listen to others' experiences. We are able to expand on our faith as we all take the journey together."

"Sometimes, reaching out and taking someone's hand is the beginning of a journey. At other times, it is allowing another to take yours."

-Marcus James

We are committed in this group to be nonjudgmental, open-minded, and willing to doubt, grow, and learn together as friends and siblings in Christ.

In the words of Journey Small Group member Taylor

Robertson: "Journey to me is an opportunity to ask questions and express doubts without fearing judgement."

We have young adults from all walks of life: single and married, with children and childless, and the age range is 20s to 40s.

Everyone in the group is able to explore and grow in faith in their own way, at their own pace. Kaylee White, who is a part of Journey, says: "I enjoy

In addition to studying our faith together, the group has joined together for Fall and Christmas outings, and has plans for an upcoming progressive dinner at our homes!

By: Journey Small Group



Journey/Families Outing to Owen Farm in the Fall

Now, meeting in Room 110 each Sunday morning (with a Zoom option to join virtually as well), the group continues to learn and grow together in faith and fellowship.

"We really enjoy being able to have genuine and deep discussion about the word and our experience testimonies with everyone else. It's a very refreshing and wonderful start to the week!"

-Chrissy & Kody Kinzer



Journey/Families Outing to McLaurin Farms at Christmas



CHILDREN & FAMILY MINISTRY

What a fun, busy year it has been so far with our preschoolers and children! Not only have they learned and played, but we have added two more beautiful babies to our care.

Beginning the year, we sent out a call to "Gimme Five!" Because of our expanding children's ministry, we are in need of more volunteers to nurture and care for our children. None of our programs would be possible without the incredible adults who provide a safe and loving space for our children to grow. Thank you to our volunteers who offer abundant welcome and love!



In February, the children picked up Valentine's bags that contained goodies for them as well as Valentines to color. These Valentines were then sent to our homebound and nursing home members.

Our grounds were busy with an Easter Egg Hunt in April welcoming both our FBC and Early Learning Center families. Besides the hunt, children visited with the Easter Bunny and collected passport stamps at different stations to explore the symbols of Easter.

For a few weeks, our kindergartener and 1st grader participated in Worship Exploration, learning why we do the things we do in worship. This time helped prepare them to remain in worship for the entire service with the help of specialized worship bags and activities.

We welcomed new nursery workers, Savannah Hylton and Juli Cespedes Ramirez. These two excellent caregivers are integral to our church nursery, which has babies to Pre-K to



school-age children now.

Throughout the Spring, the Church Nursery has been revamped. With furniture rearranged and a good clean up, our space is better prepared to welcome all ages. Thanks to the Family Art Afternoon, we also now have new artwork to adorn the walls along with our new FBC Kids logo!

By: Ashley Harrington



"Spending time with our children and ministering to them is the most worthwhile and rewarding part of my week."

-Crystal Darden, Children's Sunday School Teacher

Missions



GIVING AND DOING: MISSIONS AT FBC

The missions committee, in conjunction with the WMU, has been busy with many mission opportunities. We certainly appreciate the engagement and generosity of the entire church family in making the following mission endeavors so successful.

In the winter, WMU hosted a churchwide collection of donations for the Warming Center, and church members volunteered their time driving our bus and providing food and other services.



MHC Warming Center—we collected donations and provided our bus and drivers for this ministry.

An immediate need came to our attention from a local school nurse, and \$200.00 was used to purchase deodorant for Henry County School students in need.

We explored, and are continuing to explore, the possibility of becoming one of five supporting churches for M-HC Social Service's inclusion in Care Portal. Care Portal seeks to help families keep their children from needing to be placed in foster care.



**OFFERING FOR
GLOBAL MISSIONS**

BECAUSE PRESENCE MATTERS

For six weeks during our pastor's maternity leave, we got to learn more about our missions partnership with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. We are now exploring growing that partnership in new ways. In the meantime, we continue to have our Easter mission offering to CBF's Offering for Global Missions.

We met our Global Missions goal of \$2,750.00, with a Missions Committee contribution of \$270.00.

Two contributions totaling \$1,500.00 were also made to CBF's Ukraine Relief fund. These funds were primarily to provide food, water, shelter, bedding, hygiene items, gasoline, transportation, and other

humanitarian needs of refugees.

In June, we donated funds to sponsor Merle Prince and Brian Harrington on their mission trip to the Lakota tribe in South Dakota. We also participated in our ministry of packing food boxes at the Henry County Food

Pantry, and we will continue this ministry in the fall. Come join us!

In July, the Missions Committee donated funds for our shared weekend Vacation Bible School with Chatham Heights Baptist Church—a "Food Truck Party!"

In June and July, our church also hosted the MHC After 3 Program for M-HC middle schoolers, providing space for a summer camp in our unused Sunday School rooms upstairs. The program was most appreciative of our willingness to share our space this summer.

For the month of August, we have begun raising funds for flood relief in Eastern Kentucky through God's Pit Crew, which you can give to now!

*Thank you from the Missions
Committee!*

Bob Moore, Missions Chair



FBC WMU MISSION ACTION PROJECTS

Each month, the women of our church in the WMU meet together to learn about missions engagement and to sponsor mission action projects to keep our church focused on outreach.



"Noses & Toeses" Collection and Delivery

In February, WMU sponsored a "Noses and Toeses" drive to collect needed socks/tissues for Henry County School children. We collected 205 pairs of socks and 50 boxes of tissues!

In March, WMU joined with the Missions Committee for a focus on raising funds for CBF Global Missions.

In April, WMU stuffed Easter eggs and provided volunteers for our Easter Egg Hunt outreach to our Early Learning Center families.

May's Mission action project was a collection for Harmony Hall Assisted Living residents. FBC members collected an abundance of much-needed supplies for the residents: 57 boxes of tissues, 30 bottles shampoo/conditioner, 91 pairs of socks, 30 bottles lotion, 40 snack items, 14 washcloths, and more!

June's Mission Action Project included making surprise bags filled with items for the residents of the Horne Home. In addition, the residents enjoyed a pizza party provided by the WMU. It is always a great mission project to visit and provide the residents of the Horne Home with personal surprises. They are most

appreciative of the goodies and the visit.



In July, WMU sponsored a churchwide Cross Necklace Workshop (see top image) to make necklaces to include in the backpacks for the Back2School program in Martinsville City. Children love the colorful crosses and appreciate "a little something extra" in their bag of school supplies. WMU and church volunteers made 200 necklaces this year!

Linda Gale, WMU Chair



First Baptist Church Early Learning Center



EXCITING HAPPENINGS @ FBC ELC!

Since the beginning of January 2022, teachers and staff of First Baptist Church ELC along with staff from Smart Beginnings MHC have been working diligently to improve the quality of care received by children in attendance. The state of Virginia has a quality rating and improvement system, VA Quality, which has benchmarks to help improve the quality of care in early learning centers just like ours. The VA Quality system has 5 Quality levels that define how the program at Early Learning Centers across the state are assessed. First Baptist Church ELC began this process in 2017 reaching level 1, then level 2 shortly after. In May of 2020, the ELC progressed into a level 3 program.

became the only childcare center in Martinsville/Henry County to receive a LEVEL 5 rating!



During this time, not only were teachers and aides stretched in their abilities to provide quality care to the children in which they are responsible, the Pre-K teachers continued to pour into our oldest children preparing them to move on to Kindergarten in the Fall. On May 25, 2022 the ELC held a graduation ceremony honoring 15 graduating preschoolers.

Coinciding with graduation was our first annual art show. Each Pre-K child participated in an art class throughout the year creating art to be displayed and purchased after graduation. Our children's art raised \$225 to benefit the Missions Opportunity Fund of First Baptist Church.



Striving to better the quality of care given to the children, teachers and staff set out to begin the journey of becoming a level 4 program. For eight weeks, teachers and aides were observed and assessed on their performance in the classroom by the staff of Smart Beginnings MHC using the measurements laid out in the VA Quality improvement system. Everyone worked meticulously. Late March into early April of 2022, the ELC had an open three-week window in which a state qualified observer came into our program and observed three classes. He chose our infant room, toddler room, and Pre-K4 room. Each class went above and beyond expectations with scores surpassing level 4. On May 26, 2022, FBC ELC

Now that our summer camps are coming to an end, our new school year begins!

By: Beth Kotchish, ELC Director

Our Libraries



FREE! MCCABE LIBRARY—ONLINE & CURBSIDE TAKEOUT!



FBC's Kesler Children's Library makeover, complete with new laptops!

there is a barn-like stand full of books at all times and a garden bench for sitting and reading. This relatively quiet spot gets a lot of attention.

The Kesler Children's Library Room has kept up with the Early Learning Center (ELC) as best we can during the pandemic. We were not able to have our usual Dr. Seuss birthday celebration for two years, but we did have it this year. We gave each child a Dr. Seuss, or Seuss-like, book and gave them a party for the lunch hour. We also hosted a dessert party for the ELC workers at Easter to let them know we were thinking about them.

The Hewitt tech center has been upgraded by replacing the elderly computers with the more child-oriented Chrome books. We hope we can get back to "reading and computing" with ELC in the future.

We continue to keep up the library displays in the church, and we have other projects in mind, but many of those are on hold until barcoding can be completed. We would, of course, rather be reading. Come and check out a book!

By: Dottie Lewis, FBC Librarian

Despite the pandemic limiting our use of the library, the staff has been busy working on making McCabe accessible. We all work when we can and things appear to be shaping up.

While "on leave" we put the collection online for anyone who has digital access. We worked with Mary Taylor so that she could go to the library and pull requested books and borrowers could pick-up their requests at the front door. Libraries all over the country were having "drive-by" pick-up just like your favorite restaurant! Food for the tummy, food for the mind!

Creating a database online involves quite a bit of computer, mental, and physical work. The staff has worked very hard to get it online, but there is still a lot of tweaking to be done. Being online requires barcoding, and that is where we are now. We are physically adding barcodes to every one of the **6,000 item collection!** Surprisingly, we not quite there yet!! This project was in response to the ReShape process.

Also, as part of ReShape, McCabe instituted a Little Free Library stand in FBC's lot next door. With help from the lovely Gravelly/ Lester garden across the street,

HOPE FOR THE CITY

The Harvest Foundation in Martinsville has kicked off its strategic plan, and the focus word of the plan is “Hope.” How can we restore hope for the city of Martinsville and Henry County?

While economic development and focus on young entrepreneurs and updating our shared spaces all have a function in that work, we know that lifting spirits foremost begins around tables of fellowship, in sanctuaries of worship, and in the family we create as followers of Jesus together.

How can we be a part of the hope for our city, as our building sits prominently on the corner of two main roads on the edge of Uptown?

Come be a part of our call to action—share your faith and hope with this city. Let’s let the hope we know and trust guide us to be good neighbors in the months and years to come.



Don’t miss out another day—come to church, plug in, and share your gifts. You are needed in the work of holy change in this city and this world.

Live Faith, Be Love, Speak Hope.

See you soon,
Libby

Rev. Dr. Libby M. Grammer
Senior Pastor

Rev. David Cameron
Associate Pastor for Music & Worship

Baxter Jennings
Organist

Mary Taylor
Administrative Assistant

Kaylee White
Financial Secretary

Beth Kotchish
ELC Director

Kenny Smith
Support Staff

Pete Compton
Maintenance Technician

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
MARTINSVILLE, VA

23 Starling Avenue
Martinsville, VA 24112-2129
276.632.6336

