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SWEET SUMMERTIME

This summer, our church has had opportunities to connect with others outside our church in powerful ways. One way was our hosting the Interfaith Dialogue, organized by the Interfaith Council of Martinsville/Henry County. As a panelist, I got to speak to how interfaith dialogue can create a more cooperative community, alongside guest speakers from the Jewish and Muslim faith traditions. Our church historically has been committed to ecumenical and interfaith partnerships, and it was a joy to reconnect in person with this great group!



I also got to join with like-minded Baptists from around the world at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) General Assembly, where we were invited to pursue “Holy Ambition” by equipping ourselves to put our faith into action through learning, encouragement, and challenge.

Our Cooperative Baptist family recommitted and grew its promise to nurture women in places of pastoral ministry with a new curriculum for churches, “Equally Called,” sponsored by Baptist Women in Ministry and CBF. CBF also highlighted the work of CBF Field Personnel reaching others with the Good News of Jesus in both tangible and spiritual ways around our nation and around the globe.



At the final worship service, we commissioned new Field Personnel as well as 29 CBF-endorsed chaplains and pastoral counselors to serve in various settings—from the military to hospitals to private counselors and more.

As we fully realize our partnership with sister church Chatham Heights Baptist Church, I am reminded of CBF General Assembly 2022, where we introduced our innovative partnership, especially the sharing of two associate

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Worship



PENTECOST: A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION!

At the end of May, our church celebrated a big birthday—the birthday of the Church! The celebration of Pentecost remembers when the Holy Spirit (symbolized as fire in Acts 2) was given to the disciples and all believers, thus giving birth to the church. We celebrated by wearing the colors of fire, reading the Pentecost story from Acts 2, and hearing the scriptures read in various languages.

Our children colored their own flame and made it into a headband, symbolizing the flames that rested upon the disciples who spoke in different languages from around the known world so everyone could understand.



After Pentecost Sunday, we entered the season after Pentecost, also known as “ordinary time,” a season in the church year lasting 24 weeks, to celebrate the church and the church’s mission in the world. The liturgical color is green, symbolic of the church’s growth and mission. I’m reminded of how our children embody our growth, watching them

in worship, learning the Lord’s prayer, holding hymnals and learning the songs of the faith, and even pretending to be pastor by borrowing my stole!

In worship, we also had Caroline Tucker presented in view of a call on June 11, and the church called itself into business to vote afterward, affirming her call and her new position to begin on July 23. That first Sunday was a joyous occasion, celebrating our continued partnership with Chatham Heights Baptist Church for Kingdom work!



I’m also immensely thankful for other parts of our partnership with Chatham Heights. Because we worship at different times, we can even share pastors too, sometimes! On June 25, I filled the pulpit for Dr. Mike Hatfield at Chatham Heights, and on July 2, he filled the pulpit at FBC for me. It is a beautiful thing to share in worship and ministry together!

By: Libby Grammer

Music Ministry



LOOK AT THE WORLD

As I reflect back on May—July, I find the text of “Look at the World” by John Rutter coming to mind as we have entered what is termed the “Ordinary” part of the liturgical church year: *“Look at the World, everything all around us: Look at the world, and marvel every day. Look at the world; so many joys and wonders, so many miracles along our way”* (© 1996 Oxford University Press).

We truly are surrounded by miracles and wonders, and when we take time to see the blessings and opportunities God gives us each day it will lead us to a deeper joy and worship.

Over the past few months, I have witnessed choir members dealing with loss and sickness continue to raise their voices in praise and thankfulness to God each week. I have taken part in singing with our ELC children & watched several graduate from preschool as they all continue growing.

I have marveled at the keyboard artistry of Baxter Jennings and John Fulcher as they shared

beautiful music at the organ and piano.

I am thankful to John for filling in beautifully while I was gone on vacation and for Virginia Baptist Music & Worship Arts Camp. The theme for camp, where I taught drama classes, was “Look at the World”.

Good advice to us all, as the goodness of God surrounds us! Look around and marvel, every day. It will help us keep a song of thanksgiving in our hearts.

At our shared Vacation Bible School with Chatham Heights at the end of July, our children learned music in a short period—just a couple of days—and did a great job singing. I’m grateful to our volunteers who helped us teach them music about their faith.

By: David Cameron



John and Baxter



Music & Worship Arts Camp



Vacation Bible School



A WARM WELCOME



My name is Caroline, and I am excited to be the new Associate Pastor for families at FBC and Chatham Heights Baptist.

The focus of my role is on families who have children ranging from newborns through high school. I am not only here to teach and offer pastoral care to the children and youth, but am also called to care for and be a pastoral presence for the parents/guardians as well! I am excited to share God's love with the families of the congregation through reading bible stories together, singing, and joining in fellowship with one another!

I am originally from Danville, VA where I spent all 17 years of my childhood. I graduated from Queens University of Charlotte in 2016 with a Bachelors of Arts in Music (primary in voice) and a minor in Religion. I graduated with an Master of Divinity from Wake Forest University School of Divinity in May 2023. I was

licensed to the Gospel ministry by College Park in Danville, VA in 2020, and have started the process for ordination at College Park as well.

The majority of my children's ministry experience comes from Caroline Furnace Camp and Retreat Center where I worked for a total of 5 summers. From 2017-2018, I served as a summer camp counselor, and in 2019, 2020, and 2023 I served on leadership team; first as the Worship Coordinator, then as Program Director, and finally as staff chaplain. Caroline Furnace is where I truly started to discern a call to ministry and instilled in me a love for teaching kids about God's love!



I am engaged to Andy Taminger, and we are getting married in December 2023. Andy and I became friends as

camp counselors at Caroline Furnace and started dating a couple years later. Andy is going into his third year at United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg, PA and is going through the candidacy process to be a Lutheran pastor.



In my free time I love to make music, paint, and go on quiet walks.

I will be at First Baptist on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Please feel free to email me at caroline@fbcmartinsville.com. I am excited to be a part of this community and am looking forward to meeting you!

By: Caroline Tucker



FAITH FORMATION FUN

Our kids have been attending Summer Sunday School. They have been learning their Bible story lessons through art & crafts, music, and story time with our dedicated volunteer teachers and our paid



Janet Malone with Children in Sunday School

Nursery Staff. This summer, we welcomed new Nursery Staff Janet Malone.

Our FBC Kids also joined with sister church Chatham Heights for Vacation Bible School with a theme of Twists & Turns, a game-themed event that reminded them that "Following Jesus Changes the Game!"

Our kids have been singing their songs and telling their stories, and we look forward to their continued faith formation in the months and years to come!

In the coming weeks, our FBC Kids head back to school (Pre-K through 3rd grade), and we are planning an exciting new year of curriculum and faith development with Caroline Tucker!



By: Erica James & Kaylee White,
Children's Committee

FOOD FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

On June 10, the missions committee had planned a food packing event at the Henry County Food Pantry; however, just before the event, the Food Pantry informed us that there was a food shortage and that they did not have enough food for an event that month. Our committee voted to send \$1,000 from missions opportunity funds to help with food costs, but we know the need and the cost of food are both very high. We will continue to partner with the food pantry and offer help by sorting clothes for the clothes closet, packing food as they have it, and providing money as they need it.

Missions

In July, the Missions Committee entered our church into partnership with Patrick Henry Elementary School to provide extra food to children over the weekend who are experiencing food insecurity at home. We have provided money to buy food to stock the pantry initially, and we have invited our church and ELC families to donate to the pantry with specific food items requested throughout the school year. If you'd like to donate, check your e-newsletter or our church website for more information!

By: David Lewis, Missions Committee Chair



First Baptist Church Early Learning Center



OUR BRIGHT FUTURE AT FBC ELC!

Summer is a busy time for us here at First Baptist. Lots of exciting things have been going on this summer!

Teacher Appreciation Week was May 8-12, and our teachers received a gift card and a personal thank you from our FBC Personnel Committee.

Graduation was Friday, June 2 for our Pre-K4 class. Seven children graduated, and three of these children begin Kindergarten this month. After Graduation, the ELC hosted the Second Annual Art Show to benefit the Missions Opportunity Fund from the proceeds and we were able to contribute \$82.00 to the Fund. Our 2-year-olds held an Art Show on July 21 and collected another \$82.00 for the Fund.

Construction began on our new Pre-K4 classroom in the basement behind the elevator on June 13. This new, expanded space will allow our Preschoolers more room to learn and grow. We have also been working closely with the Virginia Department of Education Licensing

Department and the Martinsville City Building Officials to change our maximum occupancy numbers, thus allowing us to expand our program.

Our plans to add another 2-year-old classroom will become a reality in early September and a new Transitional Infant classroom will open in January 2024. What a great outreach for First Baptist Early Learning Center to benefit Martinsville and Henry County as quality childcare is so hard to find!

Finally, we welcomed Caroline Tucker as our Associate Pastor for Children and Families on July 23. Check out our FBC Kids page for more information about her! We look forward to having her engage our families in her ministry.

Please visit our thriving and growing FBC ELC!

By: Beth Kotchish, ELC Director



Gift Cards for Teachers



Graduation!



Art Show

Our Libraries



SHARING A LOVE OF READING

McCabe/Kesler/Hewitt media center has been busy! In May, we celebrated Children's Book Week II with book gifts to the ELC children and a dessert treat for the children and ELC staff. A good time was had by all. Later in the month, we pitched in for Pentecost Sunday with a display on the narthex cart of books about the Holy Spirit.



As June and the end of school rolled around, we began a series of displays about summer reading for children and adults. We hope you have spotted our displays in the usual places and at the sanctuary doorway in the front. The library staff devotes a good bit of time to the various displays monthly. We are blessed with staff members who are definitely artistically inclined.

We have also renewed our displays in what we jokingly call "The Well." I guess we came up with that name for the stairwell leading from ELC/library section into the sanctuary (picture above). We have previously used it for a storytelling place when we had weekly classes with ELC pre-pandemic. We hope to go back to more storytelling with our new associate pastor.

Also, in June, for Father's Day, we collected books from the collection related to fathers. We have quite few and these were

also put out in the narthex for that particular Sunday.

The rest of June was devoted to the least favorite of our tasks—inventory. We were excited about the event this year because we have worked very hard to be "digitized!" And we are, but adjusting to the inventory program that comes with our database and using brand new barcode scanners did not go as smoothly as we hoped. However, we have adjusted and are working on finishing up soon.

By: Dottie Lewis, Librarian



SWEET SUMMERTIME, continued from page 1

pastors. There, I announced to hundreds of other Cooperative Baptists our new idea, and it has sparked many conversations with Baptists around the country in the months since. I am excited to fully begin this journey this summer with the hiring of Caroline Tucker, serving alongside Rev. David Cameron, in these shared roles.

It is a good season to minister at First Baptist Church!

By: Libby Grammer



Libby speaking at 2022 CBF

Rev. Dr. Libby M. Grammar
Senior Pastor

Rev. David Cameron
Associate Pastor for Music & Worship

Caroline Tucker
Associate Pastor for Families

Baxter Jennings
Organist

Mary Taylor
Administrative Assistant

Kaylee White
Financial Secretary

Beth Kotchish
ELC Director

Kenny Smith
Support Staff

Pete Compton
Maintenance Technician

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