

The Epistle

AUGUST 2020



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

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Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Pastor

FIRST FORWARD... Philippians 3:13-15



From Pastor Walton's Desk

Grace and peace from God our Father!

As we enter into the month of August, I greet you with a deep sense of gratitude. Last year, I was led to encourage each of us to “be the church.” In our present times, it is more important than ever that we do just that! In the past month, we have accomplished this in a number of ways, including our “Meals on Wheels” pop-up dinner deliveries, our Virtual Vacation Bible School, our Free Virtual Summer Camp, and our weekly Fresh Food Distribution. Each of these opportunities have allowed us to carry out our church vision to “Empower Believers, Evangelize the Lost and Disciple the Saved.”

It was indeed a blessing, to surprise some of our members with Sunday dinner a few weeks ago. We provided catered meals to seniors and to those experiencing grief and illness. It is my prayer that this small gesture reminded them that they are loved and valued here at First. This year's Virtual Va-

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Social Justice Ministry is Pushing Ahead

By Shirley McCoy, Epistle Staff Writer

Kofi Annan has been appointed as servant leader of the First Baptist Church Vienna's Social Justice Ministry. The ministry plays an active role in the church's Faith in Action group by assisting with research for FBCV's Call to Action outreaches.

“This ministry was formed to get the church organized around different issues affecting our community,” Annan said. “It is an opportunity to make sure that the congregation really understands current issues, and how to be effectively engaged beyond election time so that they can be fully involved in the democratic process.”

Annan said these are challenging times where both the COVID pandemic and civic unrest have brought to light deep-rooted and persistent problems that cross health, justice, housing and employment.

“They have exposed how race impacts different communities, especially Black vs. White and how much work we still need to do to bring about equality and justice in this country,” Annan said. “Any opportunity we have to educate our

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Ministry Delivers the Good Eats

By Andrea B. Logan
Epistle Staff Writer

FBCV has many ministry opportunities which allow members and friends to serve others. A few of these ministries are Food Distribution, Vacation Bible School, Summer Camp and Meals on Wheels.

Members of the diaconate ministry participated in Meals on Wheels Outreach. They went out in teams of two delivering hot meals prepared at FBCV. The meals were delivered to a group of seniors and some sick and shut-in members. The diaconate was rewarded with warm greetings, gratitude, and a genuine thanksgiving from recipients for being thought of.

Michelle Walker, a Deacon in Training, shared that she left this ministry in action activity “feeling encouraged, uplifted, refreshed, and blessed by seeing the faces and hearing the voices of members she had not seen in months—just by assisting with a small task of delivering a hot meal prepared by others. The fellowship with my fellow diaconate team member was impactful as we served FBCV members. I can't think of a better way to represent Christ!”

Ministry in Action, continued on page 2

Ministry in Action,
continued from page 1

The community at large and FBCV are thankful for the work that our members are doing through this and other ministries! Stay tuned for other opportunities to serve the community through this great ministry!

—Contributor: Michelle Walker

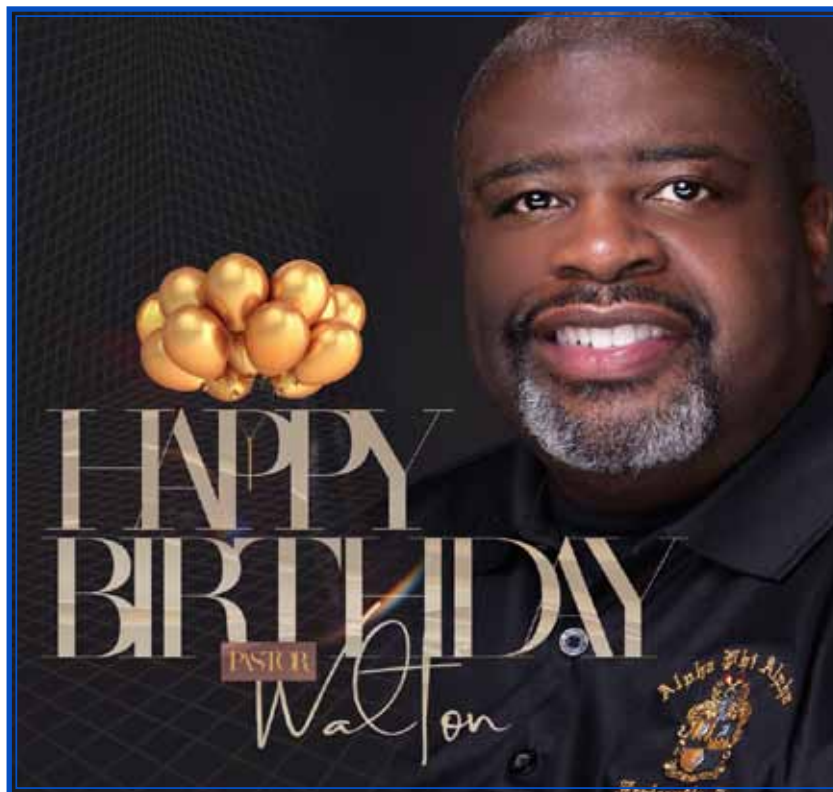
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Pastor *continued from page 1*

cation Bible School had over 100 students of all ages registered from several states. Our free Virtual Summer Camp had over 30 students registered and our young people had an opportunity to receive academic enrichment as well as biblical training.

With the launch of our Fresh Food Distribution Drive-Through, I am reminded of just how blessed we really are. I've been struck by the lines of people who come, some even from Maryland, just to get something to eat. I am grateful to God that He uniquely positioned First Baptist so that we were prepared to partner with World Vision and implement this initiative because it literally changing lives.

We would not have been able to accomplish any one of these opportunities had it not been for the support of FBCV members. Your willingness to not only continue to support this ministry financially, but also with your time is deeply appreciated. I know it isn't easy adapting to Zoom meetings and virtual classrooms, but our leaders and volunteers are constantly rising to the occasion. I also am appreciative that individuals are willing to brave the August heat and make the food distribution possible.

Lastly, I'd like to express my thanks for all of the calls, cards, prayers and well wishes I received as a celebrated my birthday at the end of last month. Indeed, all of the kind expressions helped make the day special. I'm constantly reminded that when we avail ourselves to God, we can do great things. First Forward!



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congregation as to how they can become involved and what they can do to bring about more positive results going forward—we need to act on that.”

Annan explained that Fairfax County is not unique or different when it comes to issues that have surfaced as a result of the death of George Floyd.

“These same systemic problems exist in all communities. Right in the middle of the George Floyd case, a Fairfax County police officer was fired for tazing a black man and Fairfax bears the distinction of being the hardest-hit area in Virginia with COVID,” he said. “We cannot let up on fighting to eliminate inequities in housing, teacher hiring discrimination and racial disparities discipline of students.”

Annan said the gaps in Fairfax County test scores, as well as the use of student resource officers (SROs), are unequal. “Data that SROs arrest more black and brown students for issues such as disorderly conduct and larceny than white students.”

In response a statement made by the late Congressman and Civil Rights icon, John Lewis in his documentary, *John Lewis: Good Trouble*, that said one of his fears was that he would wake up one morning and find that democracy was dead. Mr. Annan said “that he knows that democracy takes a lot of work, and it is an important right that we should exercise at every opportunity not just at election time. He also said, “Current systems were never built to benefit blacks and other minorities. We occasionally have to challenge the laws, norms, and status quo to change the trajectory. America today is in need of a revolutionary change.”

Annan said a special congressional session will be held this month where police reform will be on the agenda. “What has been offered so far is not sufficient, so we now will have an opportunity to get involved.”

Those interested in participating can contact the Virginia Coalition for Transforming Police. To learn more about recommendations being proposed, email Transform Police@gmail.com. FBCV members interested in joining the Social Justice Ministry should contact the church office at fbcvoffice@fbcv.org or Annan at kofiannan@gmail.com.

FRESH FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

July 23, 2020 marked an exciting new opportunity for First Baptist Church to “Be the Church,” with the launch of our new weekly Fresh Food Box Distribution Program. The program is scheduled at least through the end of August. Each Thursday, we are distributing thousands of boxes of food – some containing 20-25 pounds of fresh produce and others containing frozen prepared meats and cheese. This program is made possible as a result of a partnership between First Baptist and World Vision, Inc.

Thank you, First Baptist, for your continued support of our ministry. Without your financial commitment to both the church and specifically to missions, we would not be able to take advantage of this partnership with World Vision. We have also been blessed to partner with a number of churches, community organizations, and businesses in an effort to extend our reach and get food to many of our most vulnerable neighbors. A special thanks to John Sekas of Sekas Homes for providing a forklift and the pallet jacks we use each week to unload the pallets of food. We are also grateful to BRAWS (Bringing Resources to Aid Women’s Shelters), for coming to our meal distribution and providing free feminine hygiene products and women’s undergarments to families picking up food boxes. We also offer our sincere gratitude to the James Madison High School football team. Each week, former and current football players, parents, and coaches have come to assist in the unloading of the food trucks and distribution.

We still have four more opportunities scheduled and we really need your assistance to ensure that things continue



to go smoothly. Please take a moment to sign up to serve. We know it is a weekday and that many of us are working from home, but if possible, please carve out a few hours to assist. We are moving a lot of boxes, but remember, many hands make light work. We are literally providing healthy food, free of charge, to those who need it and the lines for the food are growing each week. Sign up today at: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E044FA4AD23A6F94-fresh>



MINISTRY IN ACTION: MEALS ON WHEELS





FBCV member Alex Charles for the loss of his father Neil H. Charles

FBCV member Jerry Langley for the loss of his wife Annettee Langley

A Virtual Program on COVID-19

SWAP presented a virtual program for members and friends on “Staying Healthy During COVID-19.” On June 25, our guest presenter was Dr. David Gordon, M.D., Professor of Pathology, Cardiovascular, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He spoke on what we need to know to stay well during the coronavirus or COVID-19 pandemic (19 because it started to be spread in 2019). It is important to do things to protect ourselves and our families.

- Be cautious about leaving home for public places.
- Use social distancing of 6’ apart.
- Wear a mask.
- Eat a diet that is balanced.
- Get a good sleep pattern for enough rest.
- Wash hands for 20 seconds using soap.
- Avoid crowded places.
- Seniors with health issues should be cautious.
- Stay hydrated with water.

The audience asked questions that were easily answered by Dr. Gordon. His explanations of the effects of COVID-19 and the diagrams shown informed us that this is not something this country or others have experienced before. Because it is new to us, the doctors and scientists are learning as it progresses. Listen to what the doctors say.

Pastor, Dr. Vernon C. Walton served as the moderator. Shirley McCoy presided and introduced the guest presenter while Johnnie Mikel welcomed members and guests from Houston and other locations. The musical offering was performed by Shirley Jeffries from International Community Baptist Temple.

In the past, SWAP hosted Lunch and Learn sessions in person with lunch served. The name was coined to go along with the evening session. Having a virtual presentation gave an opportunity to reach a varied audience in a relaxed way during Coronavirus times. —By Esther McCullough

College Connection Achievements and Announcements

The College Connection Ministry extends Happy Birthday wishes to the following students celebrating in August (major in parentheses):

Katura Brown, NOVA (psychology)

Kelcey Parks, Baylor University (medical humanities)

Brianna Robinson, Hampton University (psychology and political science)

—Jennifer Spriggs

Virtual Summer Camp—A Huge Success!

By HB McCown, Epistle Staff Writer

First Baptist held its first Lunch and Learning Virtual Summer Camp from July 13–July 24. The afternoon camp had 33 children from rising kindergarteners to rising seventh graders from Virginia and New Jersey.

The goal of the camp, held on Zoom, was to encourage the children to use their voices in a variety of ways by speaking out and spending more time with Christ, reading His Word and praying. The campers started each day with prayer led by the children and devotion led by Deaconess-in-Training Monica Evans, the camp co-coordinator.

The children were divided into breakout rooms by grade level and covered reading and math. Deaconess Jeanne Taylor led the reading session for the older campers, using the book *Undeclared* by Kwame Alexander. Deaconess Helen Bowers led the younger ones using *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson and *Say Something* by Peter Reynolds.

Math, taught by Evans, Debra Roney, Stacey Seay, and Bowers, was broken into four groups and included games and challenges. Four camp days were devoted to science, technology, engineering, art, and math, using crystals, germs, clouds, and building using Legos, led by HB McCown.

Camp was closed out with campers attending “Cooking with Goldie,” led by Goldie Harrison and learning to make April’s Blueberry Parfait. Harrison referred to the campers as her sous chefs.

Coordinators Evans and Seay received encouraging feedback from parents and campers about how much they enjoyed the experience and some did not want to leave the camp at the end of the session.

In spite of the pandemic, summer camp at FBCV was still able to provide fun, education, and time with Christ for the children and adults involved.

Money Matters: Personal Finance Literacy

Financial literacy focuses on the ability to manage personal finance matters efficiently, and it includes the knowledge of making appropriate decisions about personal finance, such as investing, insurance, real estate, paying for college, budgeting, retirement, and tax planning.

Elizabeth Hoyt says the sooner you master these five financial concepts, the better.

1. The Basics of Budgeting

Creating and maintaining a budget is one of the most basic aspects of staying on top of your finances. In this modern day, it's easier than ever to create a budget with the help of websites and apps, such as Mint.com. It doesn't matter if math isn't your strong suit – thanks to these user-friendly tools, everyone can get help with keeping their finances on track. And, when utilized properly, they'll keep you in the know about where your money is actually going. Without following a budget, it's difficult to hold yourself accountable on where your money is coming from and what it's going toward, so mastering the basics of budgeting is where any financial novice should begin.

2. Understanding Interest Rates

While you may touch upon the concepts within a mathematics course, it's important to understand different aspects, like compound interest. Why? Not only can it help you save even more, but it can make the difference between borrowing a small amount and paying back much more than you need to for years to come. Understanding the ins and outs of interest can impact your finances more than you likely realize, so it's an important concept to gain a better understanding of early on in life.

3. Prioritizing Saving

Obviously, saving is an important aspect of maintaining a healthy financial situation. But, the majority of students don't prioritize this aspect as much as they should. It's easy to ignore things like retirement since it seems so far off. Learning to save early on can help you gain the knowledge, practice and set of skills you'll utilize throughout your entire life. Beginners can start working on this concept in the simplest sense, like saving money for a higher-ticket item they desire. Working toward a goal is key and students need to understand that there's a lot of value in paying yourself first because the bills will always be there. Having peace of mind? That comes with practice, diligence and patience, all qualities you'll develop when mastering your savings skill set.

4. Credit-Debt Cycle Traps

It's much easier to lose credit than gain it and many students don't realize how easy it is to ruin their credit – and how difficult it can be to regain credit – before it's too late. That's why it's crucial to provide knowledge on debt early. Credit can be an extremely useful tool if it's managed correctly. Making rash decisions when you're young can end up costing you throughout adulthood so it's important to grasp the concepts and tools behind responsible credit practices as early on as possible.

5. Identity Theft Issues and Safety

In this modern day and age, identity theft is more prevalent than ever. Since everything is digital and just about everyone has shopped online at one point, your financial information is more vulnerable to fraud. Understanding this concept, along with preventive measures like password protection and limiting the amount of information shared online, can be the key to maintaining safe accounts or can lead to financial ruin. While it's not a fool-proof science (people can be safe, and things do still happen) it's important to safeguard your finances as best as possible to avoid the threats that exist.

This article was written for use by high school and college students as they begin to take responsibility for their own planning and earnings. However, these five steps can be used by anyone as guidance for correcting or developing their financial literacy. If you have any questions or would like to discuss your money management approaches or ideas, feel free to stop by your First Baptist Church of Vienna Federal Credit Union.

– Submitted by Willie Boykin based on the article <https://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/the-5-key-components-of-financial-literacy>.

