

# The Epistle

OCTOBER 2020



## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

450 Orchard St. N.W.,  
Vienna, Virginia 22180  
(703) 938-8525 • [www.fbcv.org](http://www.fbcv.org)  
Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Pastor

FIRST FORWARD... Philippians 3:13-15



## From Pastor Walton's Desk

Dear First Family,

Are you connected? If you are asking what I mean by this question, that's probably not a good sign. However the good news is, that it's not too late. This month is the launch of our brand new Connection Groups, otherwise known as small groups or discipleship groups. These groups are specifically designed to strengthen our faith by sharing the Word of God, building a sense of community, and learning from our shared experiences. The groups will convene over a six-week period each being led by a facilitator and meeting on various days and times throughout the week. The Connection Group topics include: Pressure Points, Resilient Faith, Help My Unbelief, The Church and The Racial Divide and The Life of a Jesus Follower.

My prayer is that the disciples of "First" will seriously consider registering for one of these groups. Our spiritual growth is vitally important. In addition, our connection to one another is likewise important and essen-

*Pastor, continued on page 3*

## The S.P.O.T. Launches New Young Adult Bible Study

By Rashena Draughn  
Special to the Epistle

As we continue to journey through this season of social distancing, the mantra Pastor Walton started with at the beginning of the pandemic still rings true. "The building is closed but the church is, indeed, still open." Fall is here and with the new season, come new opportunities to grow in Christ. In addition to the launch of the virtual connection groups, we will start a new series in the young adult bible study, The S.P.O.T.

To facilitate this series, we welcome Minister Christian S. Brown. Brown is a faith-driven, millennial native of Birmingham, Ala. and graduate of Howard University where she received the Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing. She is a registered nurse and graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary where she obtained the Master of Divinity degree. Brown combines both nursing and minis-

*Brown, continued on page 7*

## Men's Month Continues 'Guarding Your Temple' Theme

By Rick Taylor  
Epistle Staff Writer

October is Men's month, and FBCV has plenty in store. The theme is "Mind/Body/Soul—Guarding Your Temple" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

A virtual retreat is planned for Saturday, Oct. 17. Participating churches with FBCV are Land of Promise in Fredericksburg and Cedar Street Baptist in Richmond. Land of Promise hosted in 2018 and Cedar Street hosted last year. The time and virtual link will be announced soon.

Men's Day is Oct. 18 with a virtual 10 a.m. service.

The build-up began last month, with the fall/winter season of Wings and a Word. The virtual event featured Caitlin Murphy, the Mid-Atlantic director of Zero—The End of Prostate Cancer, a free support service that helps patients and their families navigate insurance and financial obstacles covering treatment and other needs associated with the disease. FBCV men discussed their experiences and concerns with prostate cancer and treatment.

**Join us!**

**08 OCT** FAITH, JUSTICE & SECURING THE VOTE  
CHUANTAE BROWN, ESQ. | 7:00 PM

**15 OCT** FAITH, JUSTICE & FINANCES  
MATT AARON, CFP | 7:00 PM

**22 OCT** FAITH JUSTICE & A MILLENNIAL PANEL  
PANELISTS | 7:00 PM

**29 OCT** FAITH, JUSTICE & HEALTH  
DRS. LOUIS & AMANDA GILBERT | 7:00 PM

**MIN. CHRISTIAN BROWN**  
Guest Facilitator

**What Crime Have I Committed?**  
**FAITH AND JUSTICE**

**7 PM**  
A Millennial-Led Bible Study Series

**T H U R S D A Y S**

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA**  
Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Sr. Pastor  
450 Orchard St. Vienna, VA 22180  
www.fbcv.org

Livestreaming: [www.fbcv.org/live](http://www.fbcv.org/live)

**f LIVE**  
**You Tube**

## Breast Cancer Awareness Month

**B**reast cancer is a common type of cancer and the second most common cause of cancer-related death among women in the United States, after lung cancer. It usually affects females but can also occur in males. In the past, it was nearly always fatal. However, thanks to medical progress, most people with an early diagnosis can receive effective, lifesaving treatment. The survival rate for people who receive a diagnosis of breast cancer in the early stages is 99%.

Words and quotes, in general, are powerful. They inspire us, motivate us, and strengthen us throughout our lives. Below, you will find some quotes and scriptures that have helped survivors through their breast cancer journeys.

### CANCER QUOTES OF 2018

*"You beat cancer by how you live, why you live and in the manner in which you live."* —Stuart Scott

*"Let nothing trouble you, let nothing frighten you. All things are passing; God never changes. Patience obtains all things. He who possesses God lacks nothing. God alone suffices."* —St. Teresa of Avila

*"Truly my soul finds rest in God; my salvation comes from him. Truly he is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken."* —Psalm 62:1-2

*"God didn't promise days without pain, laughter without sorrow, or sun without rain, but He did promise strength for the day, comfort for the tears, and light for the way."* —Unknown

*"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* —Joshua 1:9

*"Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you."* —Exodus 23:25

Submitted by Sandra Graham based on [www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com) and [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org)

**"Yesterday is history,  
tomorrow is a  
mystery, but today is  
a gift—that's why it's  
called 'the present.'"**

**—BILL KEANE**



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**3rd Sunday the 18th | MEN'S DAY 2020**  
**Guest Preacher: Dr. Lucius Dalton**  
**Mount Moriah Baptist Church**  
**Washington, DC**



**Pastor**, continued from page 1

tial to our growth and development as believers. We cannot do it alone. We learn by searching scripture as well as by sharing our collective stories of success and failure, tragedies and triumphs. It's not too late to make a commitment today to join a connection group. I would love to hear you say "I'm Connected."

I want to also extend a special invitation to the young adult and millennial population of our church and broader community. This month we are kicking off a new Bible Study Series designed especially with you in mind. The series is entitled, "What Crime Have I Committed? This series will emphasize issues on faith and justice. Minister Christian Brown will be our guest facilitator for the month, some of you may remember her sharing previously in The SPOT. We will focus on everything from health issues to financial planning. I'm hopeful that you will make plans to check the series out. This is millennial led but open to all.

Beloved, I look forward to a season of learning and sharing. I invite you to join me on the Journey!

## The Stephen Ministry is Here for You

The Stephen Ministry is interested in knowing how our church family is doing. We are continually praying for FBCV and our congregation in this one-to-one caregiving ministry to church members during the pandemic and in the days ahead, as it is needed. All communication between Stephen Ministry caregivers and the care receivers is kept **confidential**.

We welcome the call of God to walk alongside our church family with a listening ear and an open heart, letting the Holy Spirit lead us.

We are available by phone or email. If you would like to connect with the Stephen Ministry, please reach out to Ann Devoe at 703-987-5088 or by email at [anncdevoe@gmail.com](mailto:anncdevoe@gmail.com); or to Pat Jackson at 703-553-6378 or by email at [pat9881@aol.com](mailto:pat9881@aol.com).

—Submitted by Glenda Lewis and Sylvia Taylor

# COURSE Selections

- ✓ PRESSURE POINTS
- ✓ RESILIENT FAITH
- ✓ HELP MY UNBELIEF
- ✓ THE CHURCH & THE RACIAL DIVIDE
- ✓ THE LIFE OF A JESUS FOLLOWER

for more info:

[www.tinyurl.com/fbcvgroups](http://www.tinyurl.com/fbcvgroups)

## FBCV Virtual Connection Groups

VISIT THE REGISTRATION LINK FOR DETAILED  
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND TO SIGN UP.



## “Heartwork” Keeps V.O.P. Choir Connected

“It’s not hard work, it’s heartwork.” This is an expression I used often with the choir when things seemed to challenge us more than we would like.

Servant Leaders Markay Chichester, Teresa Lane and I decided it had been too long since we had physically seen the Voices of Praise (V.O.P.) choir member and musicians. We wanted to do something to show members we missed them. This time and season have certainly challenged us all, but we wanted the choir to know the “heartwork” continues. So, we took a journey around Northern Virginia to deliver heart-felt care packages to the members of V.O.P.

It was such a joy to see those smiling faces. Some were surprised, some were even shocked, and greeted us

with warm smiles. We enjoyed every moment of the two-day trip just to connect with the member of V.O.P., even if we had to do it while socially distancing and wearing masks. It was not hard work; it was “heartwork.” A huge shout-out to servant leaders Chichester and Lane for their dedication to ministry.

On another note, I also want to thank everyone who participated in Homecoming 2020. Special thanks to our guests Stephen Hurd, The Rock Church and those First Baptist praise team members who joined us to make Homecoming a truly blessed time. Continue to lift the Worship and Arts Ministry up in prayer as we support Pastor Walton’s vision and seek to please God. —Kwan McKnight

## WOW! What an Amazing Journey

Over the past nine weeks, First Baptist Church of Vienna has partnered with World Vision to distribute food through their Fresh Produce Drive-Thru program.

Approximately 15,200 boxes of meat (20–25 pounds each) and 9,800 produce boxes were distributed since the partnership began. This amounts to between 250 and 312 tons of food.

We have worked with more than 32 organizations and churches throughout the region. The groups have helped expand the reach of the distribution and represent organizations that serve in the following counties: Arlington, Fairfax, Fauquier, Loudoun and Prince William and the City of Alexandria.

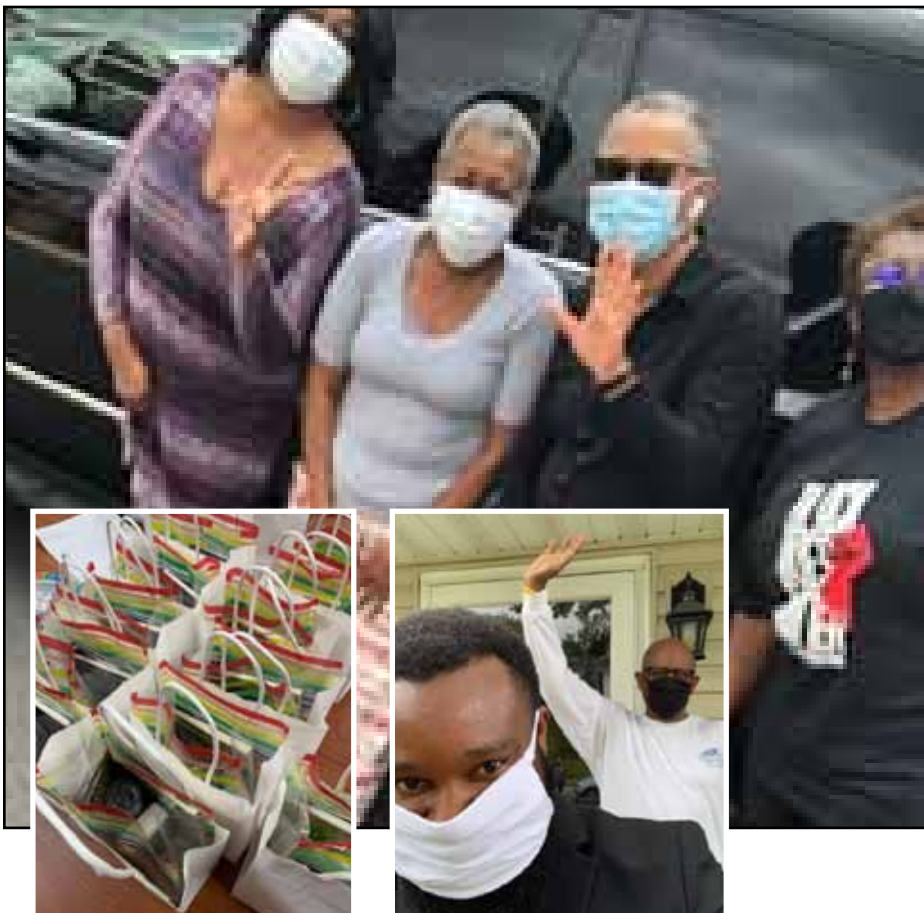
We have had over 200 unique volunteers who used their time and talent to support this endeavor. Many volunteers served for the full nine weeks.

We also partnered with a number of organizations to provide volunteers including: Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Buffalo Soldiers, Fidelity/Jennie Dean Temple #384, James H. Hayes/Bull Run Lodge #529, James Madison High School Football team, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Western Fairfax Christian Ministries. In addition, we engaged four students, who worked as summer interns for seven weeks in the program.

We would also like to acknowledge our sponsors for their immeasurable contributions to the success of the program. Many thanks to D&B Rentals of Sterling, Va., Fairfax County Department of Neighborhood and Community Services, Fairfax County Public Schools, FasTran, JHL Plumbing and John Sekas of Sekas Homes.

Thanks to everyone involved in this endeavor and now that the journey is over, there is only one thing left to say: To God Be the Glory!

—Goldie Harrison



*Pictured are Carolyn Johnson, Rev. Hazel Wynn, MarKay Chichester and Teresa Lane who delivered gift bags.*

## MINISTRY IN ACTION: MEALS ON WHEELS





# Dealing with Trauma During this Difficult Time for Children and Adults

By Shirley McCoy  
Epistle Staff Writer

There is no question that we are living through a time in our lives different from any of the wars and epidemics we may have experienced in the past and it impacts our lives on a very personal level. On some mornings I wake up feeling upbeat, social, and energetic, and on others I think I have every symptom of COVID so that all I want to do is go back to bed or veg out on the couch.

I recently learned that one possible cause of these up and down feelings is called trauma. Trauma which is caused by the stress of our COVID imposed lifestyle. I recall a TV ad where a little lady sat on her couch and shared that “Every day I wake up I have two choices, I can be happy or I can be sad. I chose to be happy.” While it may seem that during these traumatic times those choices are not clearly ours, they can still be. To deal with trauma, according to an expert (What expert?), you have to name it, claim it, and then handle it. I found some understanding and help on how to do this during a workshop given by Dr. Karen Gross.

Dr. Karen Gross, author of the

book, *Trauma Does Not Stop at the School Door* explained that trauma affects the limbic part of the brain that controls feeling and cognition. When trauma occurs it “explodes” that part of the brain leaving the person to function only on the auto neural nervous system. This makes it difficult for a person to function and learn. When this occurs, one could experience acting out, social isolation, over pleasing, and dissociative behaviors. Trauma can take away structure and a sense of stability, safety, and subtlety. We may lose our sense of place, comfort, personalization, and the assurance of people we know and love, who care about us and about whom we care.

The author suggested that in order to deal with trauma, we need to:

- Dialogue—Name it for what it is (trauma) and talk about it;
- Practice Diversion—Replace the trauma with another focus;
- Practice Active Engagement—Draw, Dance or focus on a task that opens the neural pathways and creates new ones;
- Engage in activities such as puzzles, games, crafts, construction projects, or role play, etc. in order to restart the neural system;

• Dazzle and Delight by using dramatics, costumes, dress up clothing, glittering jewelry, humor, fun and silly stuff that makes you laugh. Tongue twisters are good for laughs.

• Engage in Play—Toss balls, play tag, hide and seek, kick ball, walking, and safe sports—something active.

For a deeper understanding of the effects of Trauma on children and families and suggestions for projects and strategies, read Dr. Gross’s book, available on Amazon. Google her article on <https://nebe.org/journal/can-on-line-learning-be-trauma-responsive> and <https://kidcourses.com/masks-mirrors> for strategies for teaching children on line. Her activities offer, “creative experiences to motivate children to be lifelong learners, express their creativity, think critically, spread positivity, be well and just plain have fun!”

There is a quote I heard that frequently comes to my mind during this pandemic: “Every day that you wake up you will be faced with 99 irritations, aggravations and frustrations. The difference between winners and losers is not so much how many you have, but how you deal with them. To conquer trauma name it, claim it, and handle it.”

## The College Connection Ministry

extends Happy Birthday wishes to the following students celebrating birthdays during October:

- **Alexis Beasley:** A senior at Robert Morris University majoring in Environmental Science/Photography.
- **Kamryn C. Logan:** A junior at George Mason University majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Brain, Body, and Behavior.

—Arnitra Duckett

—Jennifer Spriggs

YOUR GIVING MATTERS!

## October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month first began in 1981 by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence as a day of unity to connect battered women's advocates across the country.

Domestic violence affects millions, both women and men, of every race, religion, culture and status. It is not just punches and black eyes—it is yelling, humiliation, stalking, manipulation, coercion, threats and isolation. It is stealing a paycheck, keeping tabs online, non-stop texting, constant use the silent treatment, or calling someone stupid so often they believe it.

The Violence Against Women Act, led by Senator Joe Biden and passed in 1994, was landmark legislation. The act combined new provisions that hold offenders accountable and provide programs and services for victims. Between 1993 and 2010, the overall rate of domestic violence dropped nearly two-thirds and state laws have reformed to address issues such as dating abuse in the workplace, stalking, employment discrimination and more.

A lot of people do not realize that they are in an abusive relationship. If your partner exhibits the following signs, you need to get out of the relationship.

- Sexual or physical abuse
- Threats to you or your family
- Attacking your capabilities, mental health, looks, or intelligence, as well as blaming you for their violent outbursts
- Jealousy, which results in isolating you from your family or friends or accusing you of not being faithful
- Checking on you all the time and anger if you hang out with certain people

Just because you don't have bruises on your skin does not mean you are not being abused. A lot of women and men suffer from emotional abuse. Unfortunately, emotional abuse is often overlooked or minimized—even by the victims. Emotional abuse includes verbal abuse. This includes controlling behavior, intimidation, isolation, shaming, blaming, name-calling, and yelling. Abusers who use psychological or emotional abuse will often threaten physical violence, as well as other repercussions if you do not follow demands.

Financial abuse is one of the subtler forms of emotional abuse. Some examples of this include:

- Taking your money or stealing
- Sabotaging your job—calling constantly or making you miss work
- Preventing you from choosing your own career or working
- Restricting you to an allowance
- Withholding basic necessities, such as shelter, medications, clothes, and food
- Making you account for every penny you spend
- Withholding credit cards or money
- Rigidly controlling your finances

Nearly three out of four Americans personally know someone who is or has been a victim of domestic violence. Now is time to take a stand. Support survivors and speak out against domestic violence all month long.

*Submitted by Sandra Graham based on [www.breakthecycle.org](http://www.breakthecycle.org) and [www.helpguide.org](http://www.helpguide.org)*



Mary Roy and family  
for the loss of her aunt,  
Beatrice Williams

.....  
**Brown,** *continued from page 1*

try daily by creating platforms through holistic wellness.

Brown became a licensed minister at Mount Moriah Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., where she currently serves as the youth minister. She is the owner of RISE Enterprises LLC, a Certified Life Coach, the RISE Scholarship founder, and author of two daily devotional books entitled, "Rise and Shine" and "Single is not a Sin." She has also extended her ministry beyond the borders of the United States while journeying to South Africa and El Salvador on mission trips. She is a 2019 Black Alumni Influencer, a 2019 Howard University Move-maker and is featured on WYCB Radio.

Brown considers faith and family as her foundation. She is the only girl of six boys. She is engaged to Matt Aaron and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Brown is a fearless nurse, motivator, author, entrepreneur, life coach and preacher of the Gospel. She stands firm in her call to transform the lives of all through the power of God.

We look forward to seeing how God uses her to bless our church and specifically our young adults. Please join Pastor Walton in welcoming Minister Christian Brown to First Baptist .

## Money Matters: How to Build Credit

**B**uilding credit can be tricky. If you don't have a credit history, it's hard to get a loan, a credit card or even an apartment. But how are you supposed to show a history of responsible repayment if no one will give you credit in the first place?

Several tools can help you establish a credit history:

- If your aim is to get a credit card, you could start with a secured credit card or co-signed card, or ask to be authorized user on another person's card.
- If you want to build credit without a credit card, you might try a credit-builder loan, secured loan or co-signed loan. There are also ways to use rent, phone and utility payments to build credit.

Get a credit-builder loan or a secured loan

A credit-builder loan is exactly what it sounds like — its sole purpose is to help people build credit.

Typically, the money you borrow is held by the lender in an account and not released to you until the loan is repaid. It's a forced savings program of sorts, and your payments are reported to credit bureaus. These loans are most often offered by credit unions or community banks.

Another option: If you have money on deposit in a bank or credit union, see about a secured loan for credit-building. With these, the collateral is money in your account or certificate of deposit. The interest rate is typically a bit higher than the interest you're earning on the account, but it may be significantly lower than your other options.

Building a good credit score takes time and a history of on-time payments.

To have a FICO (Fair Isaac Corporation) score, you need at least one account that's been open six months or longer and at least one creditor reporting your activity to the credit bureaus in the past six months.

Practice these good credit habits to build your score and show that you're credit-worthy:

- Make 100% of your payments on time, not only with credit accounts but also with other accounts, such as utility bills. Bills that go unpaid may be sold to a collection agency, which will seriously hurt your credit.
- If you use credit cards, keep your credit utilization low — utilization is the percentage of your credit limit you use. We recommend keeping your credit utilization below 30% on all cards.
- Avoid applying for multiple credit accounts close together; applications for credit can cause a small, temporary drop in your score. Multiple applications can cause significant damage. A recommendation is to space applications out about six months.
- Keep credit card accounts open. Unless you have a compelling reason to close an account, consider keeping it open. Closing an account can hurt your credit utilization and reduce your average account age

A credit report is a record of how you've used credit in the past. Your credit scores predict how you'll handle credit in the future, using the information in your credit reports. You'll want to monitor both to watch for errors and to see your credit-building efforts pay off.

Please feel free to contact your First Baptist Church Federal Credit Union for assistance in building or improving your credit score.

*Submitted by Willie Boykin (based on "How to Build Credit by Erin El Issa, Bev O'Shea, June 12, 2020 article in "nerdwallet.com")*

## FBCV Member Puts "The Word" Out in His Own Way

By Rick Taylor  
Epistle Staff Writer

**F**BCV's Jonathan Williams says *The Word* got him through tough times. As a result, he put some words of his own together about that experience in the self-published *Little Books of Faith: Trials*. The book, released last month, contains biblical references and testimonies to help readers conquer obstacles in life. "I just wanted to do something that honors God," said Williams, who emphasized he isn't looking for notoriety.

Williams, a former president of the FBCV Men's Ministry, said 2018 was tough for him. He felt stress, anxiety and depression. Plus, a cousin he grew up with died suddenly at the end of the year.

Writing was a stress reliever for Williams. He started out writing poems but wanted to do something more. He turned to the Bible—his marked-up one.

"There were certain things I wanted to write about," Williams said, recalling Bible stories he heard when younger. Hearing the testimonies of FBCV men during ministry retreats also came to mind.

Simplicity was also something he wanted for *Little Books of Faith*. It is 119 pages and is alphabetically ordered from the subject matters of "Adversity" to "Zombie." Each "trial" covered is four pages with biblical references at the end.

"I wrote it in a voice for younger people to understand, but it's for everyone," says Williams, the father of a college sophomore and a high school freshman. "If I don't sell any of these, I wanted to pass something on."

The book is available at the FBCV Marketplace for \$15. Additional information, as well as the Verse of the Month, is on lbof.net.