

JULY 2025

The

Epistle

First Baptist Church of Vienna, Va.



From
**Pastor
Walton's**

Grace and peace from God, our Father!

As we cross the threshold into the second half of the year, we do so with gratitude in our hearts and vision in our spirit. God has been faithful—and you, our FBCV family, have been steadfast. Together, we continue to walk out our vision: empowering believers, evangelizing the lost, and discipling the saved.

This past month offered us a glimpse of what happens when faith and community collide in celebration. Our inaugural Juneteenth Parade and annual Juneteenth Celebration brought a wave of joy that swept through our town like never before. Streets filled with music, laughter, and hope. It was more than a celebration—it was a sacred moment.

We're still receiving calls, emails, and handwritten letters from neighbors and friends saying how much they loved their time with FBCV. Many called it one of the most impactful events the town has ever seen. That's not just an event win—that's a ministry win. Thank you to everyone who planned, participated, and prayed. You showed the heart of Christ in action.

As we look to July, our momentum continues. This month includes:

PASTOR, continued on page 3

Are You Uneasy About Sharing Your Faith?

By Jeanette Washington and Jackie Davis

In the June Epistle article, "Evangelism: What is It? Why Does it Matter?" the question was posed: Did you know that most church members never share their faith? Let me share with you one reason many don't make sharing the gospel a priority in their everyday lives.

My father was a retired disabled war veteran. He also happened to be a "PK", a pastor's kid. His life reminded me distinctly of the challenge of the Church of Jesus Christ in the area of evangelism and witnessing.

In the military structure of order and command you have generals, the highest-ranking officers, who develop the strategy to not only win battles but ultimately win the war. So what would it look like if my dad sat back and said, "let the generals and admirals go to the front lines and fight it out for victory. I'm just a private first class out here."

One doesn't have to be a history scholar or war strategist to know this would be lunacy and would throw the ranks into chaos and utter defeat. Yet this is a subtle and crafty strategy the devil has incorporated within the Church today.

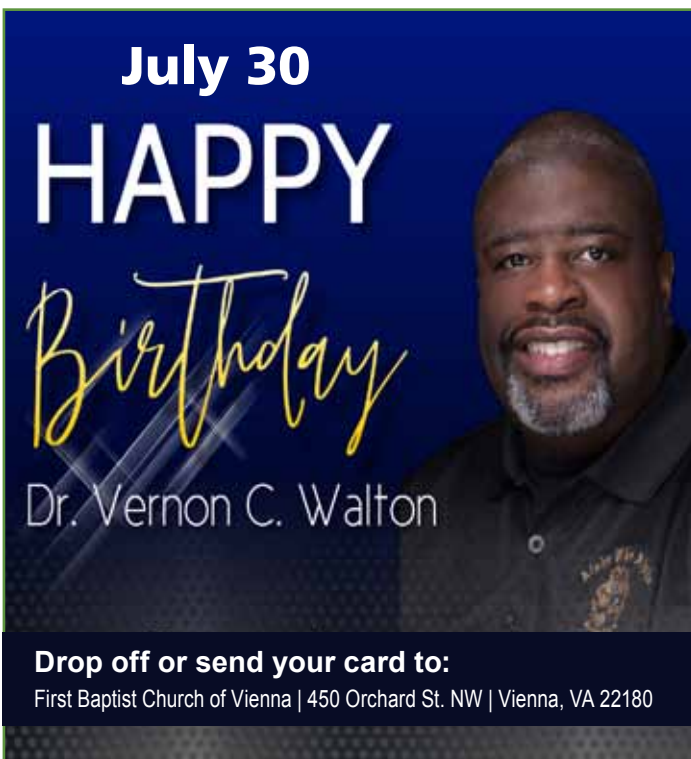
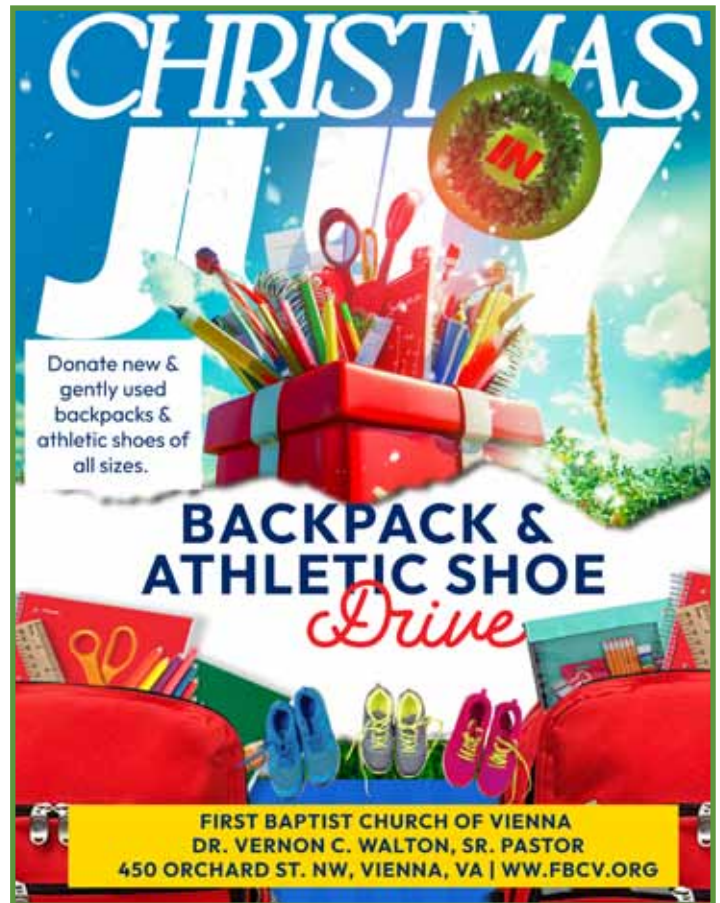
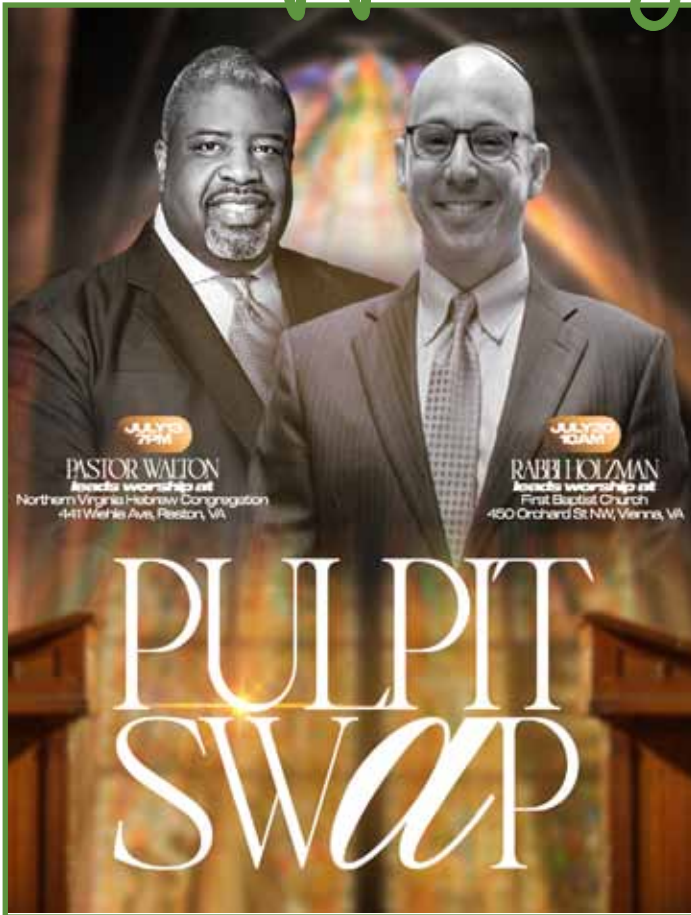
With most church members, the vast opinion is that witnessing and evangelizing the lost is the job of the pastor—the general—fighting for the souls of men, women, boys and girls. The mentality of many is that this work is for the professionally trained individuals—the generals—after all I'm just "Lottie Dottie, everybody" in the church and what do I know about theology? I haven't graduated from seminary so please let's leave it to those folks who are paid to do this—those ministers—the generals.

Yes, fear and unfamiliarity are aspects that challenge us, but we can't leave winning the war for souls to only the generals to fight!

We must share our faith because it's part of God's war strategy as the Sovereign General, clearly laid out in His Word. The battle is won on the front lines by those who are enlisted. And like the disciples, who weren't trained pastors, preachers or ministers—if we "say yes" to our enlistment; allow ourselves to go through basic and continual training by and through the Word of God; we too will be able to begin to make sharing the gospel—the good news of Jesus' birth, His death, burial and resurrection from the dead to the pay the penalty for our sins—past, present and future, part of our lifestyle.

SHARING FAITH, continued on page 3

Happenings at FBCV



PASTOR, continued from page 1

• The continuation and conclusion of our Summer Camp, where young minds are nurtured and inspired.

• The start of our highly anticipated Freedom School, rooted in literacy, leadership, and liberation.

• And the return of our beloved Christmas in July, reimaged with purpose.

You may notice that Christmas in July looks different this year. While our mission remains—to serve, love, and uplift—the method has shifted. We’ve seen the fear in the eyes of some of our Latino brothers and sisters amid increased ICE activity and immigration-related threats. We remember how, during the previous Trump administration, many feared church buses, worried that an invitation to worship might be a trap.

What a painful truth: when people no longer feel safe in God’s house.

So this year, our prayer is that Christmas in July becomes more than a tradition—it becomes a declaration. A declaration to the communities we serve that we see you, we love you, and we will protect your peace. That FBCV is not just a church on the corner—it’s a sanctuary in the storm.

Let’s press forward and finish this year stronger than we started. Let’s keep being light in dark places and love in every space we enter.

SHARING FAITH, cont. from page 1

And if we accept what He did on the cross and ask Him into our lives as Lord and Savior, we shall be saved. This allows us to be a forever witness—eternally enlisted in the army of the Lord! The general’s—the pastor’s—responsibility is to make sure his soldiers are trained and ready for whatever the enemy does. When we attend Bible Study, the Christian Learning Academy (CLA) and Sunday morning worship, we are continuing to be better equipped to empower believers, evangelize the lost, and disciple the saved.

You’re Invited: Dr. Walton to Preach at First Mt. Zion Baptist Church

We are excited to share that Dr. Walton will be preaching at First Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Dumfries, VA, on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at 7:30 PM. This special evening promises to be a powerful time of worship, inspiration, and community fellowship.

Adding to the spirit-filled atmosphere, our dynamic Worship and Arts Ministry will be leading us in song, lifting praises and preparing hearts for the Word. We are honored to represent our congregation and share in ministry with our friends at First Mt. Zion.

LOCATION:

First Mt. Zion Baptist Church
16622 Dumfries Road
Dumfries, Va. 22025

Come and support Dr. Walton and our Worship and Arts Ministry as we come together to worship and glorify God. Mark your calendars and bring a friend—you won’t want to miss this! —*Stacey Seay*

Freedom School: A Week of Faith, Learning, and Liberation

This summer, First Baptist Church of Vienna is excited to bring back Freedom School—a week-long journey of inspiration, education, and community rooted in the traditions of the Black Church and the freedom movement. From July 14 to 18, participants of all ages will gather under the theme, “A Journey with Moses,” to explore what it means to walk in faith, pursue justice, and experience spiritual liberation.

Freedom School is more than just a program. It’s a movement. Each day is thoughtfully designed to stir the spirit and expand the mind, combining music, Scripture, storytelling, and hands-on learning to connect biblical narratives to our modern-day hopes and struggles.

Throughout the week, attendees will enjoy:

- Soulful worship and music drawn from the Black freedom tradition
- Classes and discussions tailored for children, teens, and adults
- Creative workshops that explore faith through art, history, and community action
- A rich, intergenerational environment committed to healing, growth, and transformation

“Freedom School is a sacred space,” says Rev. Vernon C. Walton, Senior Pastor of FBCV. “It’s where we come together to reflect on our faith, resist injustice, and reimagine a better future through the lens of Scripture and the lived experience of our people.”

All sessions will be held in person at First Baptist Church of Vienna, 450 Orchard Street NW, Vienna, VA 22180, and everyone is welcome—whether you’ve attended before or are joining for the first time.

To make this powerful week possible, we’re inviting members of our community to volunteer their time and talents. We need help with teaching, greeting, meal support, activities, and more.

Visit our Linktree to register to attend or sign up to volunteer. Your participation can make a lasting impact. —*Stacey Seay*

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

MINISTRY UPDATE

"And let us not grow weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." – Galatians 6:9

This summer has been nothing short of amazing! Our Youth and Young Adult Ministry has had an exciting and impactful July, filled with moments of learning, laughter, growth, and service. One of our major highlights is the return of Freedom School, happening July 14–18, where young scholars will engage in powerful biblically-based experiences while discovering their voice and purpose. This year is being lived out daily through the passion and creativity of our students and staff. We're watching a generation rise up with boldness, compassion, and vision!

Our FBCV Summer Camp has also been a space of joy and transformation. From arts and Fitness Friday to daily devotionals and critical thinking activities, our campers are not only having fun, but they're also learning life skills that will guide them far beyond the summer. A consistent theme throughout camp has been the importance of giving back. Whether it's through learning leadership skills or having devotional time or showing acts of kindness with each other, our young people are being challenged to see themselves as givers and not just receivers. That spirit of generosity is shaping their hearts and building character that honors God.

I want to give a special shout out to Zack Byas, who joined us during the first week of camp to share his entrepreneurial journey and his inspiring clothing brand, Eclipse. Zack's

testimony of faith, creativity, and perseverance encouraged our youth to dream big and move with purpose. His story reminded our young people that what starts as a vision can become a movement when God is in the center of it. Thank you, Zack, for sowing into our youth and for representing what it looks like to lead with excellence and integrity!

As we look ahead, we're also preparing for the launch of another exciting year of Excellence Academy—our tutoring and academic support program. We are in need of volunteers and tutors who are passionate about helping students grow academically. Your presence can make a powerful difference in a young person's life. We're excited about what this year will bring and how God will use this ministry to shape minds, build confidence, and sow seeds of excellence. Let's keep praying, serving, and growing together—because the best is yet to come!

As we move through the rest of this summer, I want to encourage every young person and parent reading this to stay the course. God is doing a mighty work in this generation, and even in seasons of rest and recreation, there is revelation. Keep showing up, keep believing, and keep trusting that God is writing a beautiful story through your life. The best is not behind us—it's still ahead. Let's keep building, dreaming, and giving back together.

—Minister Kennard "KJ" Jones



Men's Ministry Update for July

The Brethren of FBCV had another busy few months of blessed support across the inspirational activities of our congregation. Most notably were the many led in the Juneteenth Parade and Festival. Deacons Julian Purvis (Parade), Michael Clinton (Security), Jeffrey Grant (Car Show), and Andre Carpenter (Set up and Clean Up) just to name a few of those who stepped up and worked diligently in the planning and execution. Of course, we can't leave out the incredible leadership of Kwan McKnight and Jaelin Mitchell with the music that we all enjoyed so much. These brothers and many more all lent a hand to make it a most memorable day

We also celebrated another **Wings and a Word** at Glory Days in Fairfax. More on what we discussed in future Epistles.



Dee Dee Carter and family to commemorate the 69th birthday of their brother,
Charles Carter, Jr.

Dee Dee Carter and family in loving memory of their grandfather and great grand father,
Deacon Joseph Carter.

Alees Coates-Richardson, Helen Carter and their children to commemorate the birthday of their mother and grandmother,
Idelia Smith.

Larry and Gail Henderson to commemorate the 59th birthday of their daughter,
LaTanya Williams.

Gloria Carter, Edward Hansborough, grandchildren and great grandchildren to commemorate 113th birthday of their mother and grandmother,
Edith Hansborough.

Gloria Carter, grandchildren and great grandchildren to commemorate 109th birthday of her mother-in-law,
Thelma Humes.

—Compiled by Ceola Allen



On the left: Sinclair Harris, Men's Ministry Servant Leader



A Reimagined Christmas in July

In the spirit of our yearlong RESET theme, we've reimagined our annual Christmas in July celebration to better reflect the needs of our community while prioritizing safety, comfort, and compassion.

After thoughtful consideration and guidance from Senator Warner and local county officials—who advised against large gatherings due to the current political and social climate—we've reshaped this year's format to ensure we can continue to serve without compromise.

This year's Christmas in July will take from Sunday, July 27 through Saturday, August 2. Each day will focus on intentional acts of care for our neighbors, with a focus on students, families, and individuals experiencing homelessness.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

- Sunday, July 27: We're heading to The Remakery in Reston, where we'll support local children with backpacks and school goodies to help them start the school year strong.

- Saturday, August 2: We'll be delivering special goodie bags to clients at the Embury Rucker Shelter and hosting a joyful celebration at The Lamb Center, a day center serving individuals experiencing homelessness.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

As part of this reimagined effort, we're collecting new and gently used backpacks and athletic shoes (only athletic styles, please) for men, women, and children. You can drop off your donations in any of the clearly marked receptacles around the building.

To sign up to volunteer, or participate, please visit our **Linktree** and be part of the weeklong celebration.

Let's make this reimagined Christmas in July a blessing to our community—meeting needs, spreading joy, and creating safe spaces of hope for all.

Women's Ministry Brunch and Blessings Event

The Women's Ministry held a Brunch and Blessings event on June 28. Although I was unable to attend, I have heard fantastic feedback about the fellowship, inspiration, and joy that filled the room.

A heartfelt thanks to Lainey Bernard for her outstanding leadership in planning and coordinating such a meaningful event. We also deeply appreciate the efforts of the committee members (Antionette Guidry, Ann Devoe, Jerri Ricks, and Marcia Harvey) for their time, creativity, and service in making the day a special one.

We are grateful to Rev. Jeannette Washington for offering a soul-stirring prayer that set a powerful tone and reminded everyone of God's goodness. Truly, the presence of the Lord was felt, and it's clear this event blessed all who attended.

We also extend our gratitude to the women who surprised one of the servers with a small gift of appreciation—a beautiful act of kindness. Also each attendee left with a gift bag to fill with women's toiletries, which will be distributed during FBCV's Christmas in July outreach. If you were not present but would like to participate in this project, I have a few extra bags available. Please let me know, and I will bring them to church for you.

Finally, we extend warm wishes to all who are celebrating birthdays or anniversaries in July—may your special day be filled with love, joy, and reminders of how cherished you are.

Please note that the Women's Ministry will not meet on Monday, July 7. We look forward to gathering again at our next regular meeting on the first Monday in August—August 4.

Be encouraged, stay safe, and continue to shine His light wherever you go.

—Michelle Daly

On behalf of the Women's Ministry

Juneteenth Celebration and Parade: A Joyful Success!

This year's Juneteenth Celebration and Parade was a resounding success, filled with joy, pride, and community spirit. We welcomed nearly 900 guests and participants throughout the day, making it one of our most well-attended events to date!

With approximately 60 vendors offering food, goods, services, and cultural displays, there was something for everyone to enjoy. The atmosphere buzzed with excitement as families, neighbors, and visitors gathered to commemorate freedom and unity.

We were thrilled to host our first-ever Juneteenth Parade, which brought vibrant energy to the streets and set a strong foundation for future celebrations. Another major highlight was the inaugural Juneteenth Fashion Show, featuring stunning designs from Esty Designs and Eclipse by ZMB, a creative clothing line by our very own Zachary Byas. The fashion show was a hit, showcasing Black creativity and entrepreneurial spirit.

A heartfelt thank you to all of our team leads, volunteers, and supporters who made this event possible. This Juneteenth reminded us not only of how far we've come but how powerful we are when we come together. —Stacey Seay

MINISTRY MEETING SCHEDULE

All are welcome. join a new ministry today!

Burden Bearers
Feed the Homeless Ministry
HANDS Health & Wellness
Missionary
Nursery
Parking Lot
Parent Nation
Ushers
Women's Ministry
Worship & Arts (rehearsals)
Young Adults
Youth Advisory Council

M-5pm; T,Th, F-6pm; Su-7:30pm
(Conference Call Line)

4th Monday at 7pm (Virtual)

1st Tuesday at 7pm (Virtual)

3rd Monday at 6:30pm (Hybrid)

1st Monday at 7pm (Virtual)

1st Sunday at 8:30am (In-Person)

1st Thursday at 6:00 pm

2nd Thursday Time? (Virtual)

3rd Tuesday at 6:30pm (Virtual)

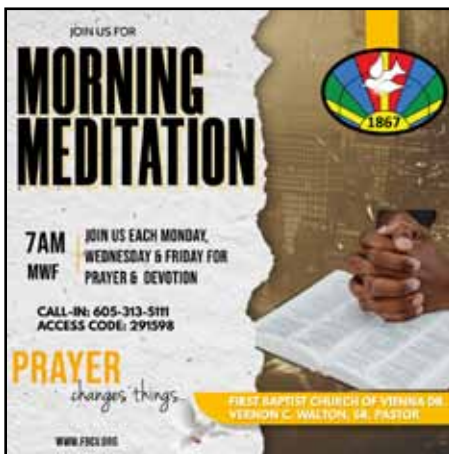
Tuesday Weekly at 7pm (In-Person)

2/6 and 3/6 at 6:30pm; 1st Thursday at
6:30pm (Virtual)

1st Tuesday at 6:30pm (Virtual)

FOR MORE INFO CALL
703-938-8525

WWW.FBCV.ORG



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA

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Virginia 22180
(703) 938-8525 • www.fbcv.org
Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Pastor

July



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3	4 7:00 am Prayer Call	5
6 Communion 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	7 SUMMER CAMP Week 3 7:00 am Prayer Call	8 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study	9 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	10	11 7:00 am Prayer Call	12
13 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	14 7:00 am Prayer Call 6:00 pm Freedom School	15 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study 6:00 pm Freedom School	16 7:00 am Prayer Call 6:00 pm Freedom School	17 6:00 pm Freedom School	18 7:00 am Prayer Call 6:00 pm Freedom School	19
20 Pulpit SWAP with NVHC 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	21 7:00 am Prayer Call	22 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study	23 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	24	25 7:00 am Prayer Call	26
27 Christmas in July 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	28 7:00 am Prayer Call	29 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study	30 HAPPY BIRTHDAY, PASTOR! 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	31		The Nursery is open during 10:00 am worship on 2 nd , 3 rd , & 4 th Sundays

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

2 Corinthians 5:17