

NOVEMBER 2025

The

Epistle

First Baptist Church of Vienna, Va.



From
**Pastor
Walton's
Desk**

Grace and peace from God, our Father!

As we move into this season of Thanksgiving, I find myself reflecting on the goodness of God and the faithfulness of His people. The month of October brought with it both blessings and trials—moments that reminded us of the mountaintop and the valley, of joy and of perseverance. Yet through it all, we have seen the hand of God steady and sure, guiding us forward with grace that never runs dry.

Thanksgiving is more than a day on the calendar; it is a discipline of the soul. In times of uncertainty, gratitude becomes an act of faith. When we say “thank You, Lord,” we are not only acknowledging what God has done, but also trusting what God will yet do. As a people, we have learned to give thanks not just after the victory, but through the struggle—knowing that all things still work together for good.

This month, we pause to honor our Senior Saints, those faithful witnesses who have walked with the Lord through seasons of hardship and harvest. You are the keepers of memory, the bearers of wisdom, and the proof that God is able to sustain us through it all. Your example reminds us that the same God who brought us this far will not leave us now.

PASTOR, continued on page 4

Season of Giving is Here

By Stacey Seay, Special to The Epistle

Thanksgiving for All: A Community Dinner and Outreach

As we enter this season of gratitude, First Baptist Church of Vienna is hosting its annual Thanksgiving for All Community Dinner to share the warmth and fellowship of the holiday with those who need it most.

Families of furloughed and unemployed individuals, college students, and members of the unhoused community are invited to join us for a delicious meal and an afternoon of encouragement and connection. The dinner will take place on Saturday, Nov. 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

We are asking members of FBCV to help make this event possible by serving in a variety of ways:

- **Meal Service:** Help serve food and welcome guests.
- **Setup and Cleanup:** Assist with preparing the space and restoring it afterward.
- **Greeting and Fellowship:** Offer hospitality and share in conversation and community.

SEASON OF GIVING, continued on page 2



SEASON OF GIVING, *cont. from page 1*

• **Transportation Assistance:** Help the Transportation Ministry provide rides for those who may need assistance getting to and from the dinner.

Our goal is to provide a warm meal, heartfelt encouragement, and a spirit of gratitude during uncertain times.

Thanksgiving Basket Outreach

In addition to the dinner, we are also preparing Thanksgiving baskets for our partner school and for families within our church and community who could benefit from some extra support this season. Families who have been supported in past years will be placed on a waiting list and will receive baskets if they are available once all new families have been served. If you or someone you know is in need of a Thanksgiving basket, please contact the church office.

While our distribution plans are still being finalized, we are coordinating with our community partners to determine how to best use our resources—especially in light of the ongoing government shutdown—to meet the greatest needs.

We will need volunteers to help with both assembly and distribution of the baskets:

• **Basket Assembly:** Nov. 20, beginning at 10 a.m. (until completed)

• **Basket Distribution:** Nov. 22, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

If you can serve at either event, please sign up to assist and check the sign-up regularly for updates.

Christmas Blessing Boxes

We are excited to bring joy to at least 100 children through our Christmas Blessing Boxes! These boxes are designed to brighten Christmas for children from families who may be struggling financially, providing gifts, love, and encouragement during the holiday season.

For our teens, we will be including personalized Loved Bibles in their boxes—helping them experience the true meaning of the season. We invite you to join us for special crafting events, where you can create these meaningful items with purpose and care.

In addition, we are preparing custom gifts to be delivered to local nursing homes, spreading cheer and companionship to our senior neighbors during the holidays.

Look out for upcoming dates and opportunities to participate in this meaningful ministry—your time and creativity will help make this season brighter for children, seniors, and our community.

Giving Thanks by Giving Back

Our community service is only possible through our collective willingness to give of our time, talent, and treasure. Your missions giving and willingness to serve allow us to continue extending compassion, meeting needs, and sharing Christ's love in tangible ways.

Together, we can ensure that everyone in our community experiences the love, hope, and abundance of this Thanksgiving season.



Let's Sing Our Thanksgiving

"Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His love endures forever." —Psalm 107:1

As the leaves fall and the air grows crisp, our hearts are drawn once again to this season of gratitude. November invites us to pause to look back on God's faithfulness and to lift our voices in thanksgiving for His steadfast love.

In worship, we often say that every song is a story. This month, I've been reflecting on how gratitude itself is a song written not just with melodies and harmonies, but with hearts that remember what God has done. Whether through a simple prayer, a whispered "Thank You," or a chorus sung in community, thanksgiving is worship. It tunes our hearts back to the rhythm of grace.

This year has brought many changes and challenges, especially as our nation navigates uncertain times. Yet, even in the midst of need, God calls us to be instruments of His love. As a church, we have the sacred opportunity to embody thanksgiving not only in our praise but also in our generosity.

As we move toward the Advent season, may we continue to lift our eyes and our voices to the One who is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Let our worship be more than songs we sing on Sunday; let it be the melody of our lives throughout this season of gratitude.

So, church family, let's sing our thanksgiving. Let's live our praise.

And let's trust that God will take even our smallest notes of service and weave them into a masterpiece of His glory.

With a grateful heart,
Kwan McKnight,
Worship & Arts Director

Cocoa with Santa

Bring your friends and family to a special holiday celebration at First Baptist Church of Vienna! Join us on Saturday, Dec. 6 at 11a.m. for Cocoa with Santa, a festive event full of fun, laughter, and holiday cheer.

Enjoy warm cider and hot cocoa, participate in games, and capture memories with photos with our favorite Santa. Wear your favorite Christmas (or Ugly) sweater to add to the festive spirit (and win prizes)!

This year, we're making sure there's something for all ages! In addition to games, we'll be hosting a Christmas carol sing-along so everyone can join in the holiday fun.

Come with your family, friends and neighbors and celebrate the kickoff of the Christmas season with us—fun for the whole family is guaranteed! Don't miss this opportunity to create lasting memories and share in the joy of the season.

—Stacey Seay

GOSPEL JAZZ BRUNCH

Friday, Dec. 12, at 11:30 a.m.

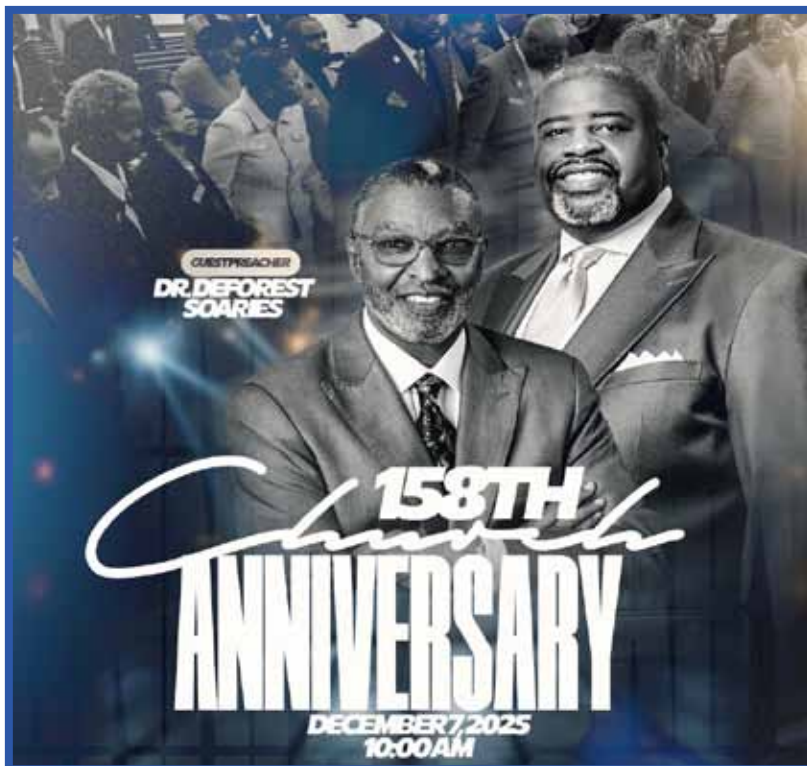
**Dominion Valley, 15351 Championship Dr.
Regency Country Club, Haymarket, VA 20169**

**\$75. Make check to First Baptist Church of Vienna
(Note in memo For SWAP Jazz Brunch)**

For more info contact

**Dr. Emma Valentine (301-412-9151)
or Johnnie Mikel (703-505-1979)**

Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Senior Pastor



**FBCV Member
Goldie Harrison
for the loss of her niece,
Tiana Wheeler**

A Marriage Ministry Moment

November is a great month to show gratitude for one another. While celebrating with family and friends, don't forget to show your gratefulness to your spouse. Three things you can do this month to show your gratefulness are:

Pray together: Thank God specifically for your spouse and the qualities you appreciate.

Pray for them privately: Gratitude deepens when you bring your spouse before God in prayer.

Worship together: Express shared gratitude through faith — it strengthens both your bond and your spiritual connection.

SAVE THE DATE:

The Marriage Ministry will hold a session on "Navigating the Seasons of Marriage" on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m.–12 p.m. at FBCV in the Fellowship Hall. This session is designed to help couples better navigate sudden and sometimes unexpected seasons of loss, such as the death of a loved one, the loss of a job, or the decline of good health. Yolanda N. Smith, Licensed Professional Counselor, Pivot for Life Counseling and Wellness, LLC will lead the session. —Natalie Ruffin

Walk the Talk: Faith in Action, Living With Purpose

"I started praying, asking God, 'Dear God, put someone in my path today that I can witness to. And let that person be receptive, and let me realize that it's not me, but it's the Holy Spirit living in me.'"

These are the words of someone who walks the talk daily. I sought her out to share with us a glimpse of her passion to tell others about Jesus. This is her story. "God has given me the ability of not being afraid but just knowing that sharing the gospel is what He commanded all of us to do. It was not just given to certain people. And that's why I want to talk to people, it's just natural." She goes on to say, "It's so easy to witness today. Using what's happening in the world today gives me more things to bring up - what God expects of us today. God is speaking to us. There are times you can tell when people don't want you to say anything about Jesus Christ. But God always puts people in my path."

"I believe we're living in the last days, but you can't be afraid. Always allow the Holy Spirit to lead you and

direct you. And if you have faith and believe it, He will. But sometimes we say we have faith, but we really don't believe it, because we just can't get the 'me, myself, and I' out of the way. You have to trust in God. Just ask God to put words in your mouth and let the Holy Spirit lead you. If you try to go out on your own, you're going to be on your own. It's not going to work. But if God goes with you, He will give you everything you need, the words to say!"

"I don't call myself good at it. I just know that you must have faith and believe and ask God for it and trust He's going to do it. And it has never failed me. I have witnessed to so many people, since January and what's going on in our country because I said, "God is speaking to us loud and clear."

"In Bible Study, we're reading the book of Habakkuk. What is God's message for us today? Do we just complain about what's going on? Complaining + complacency = complicity. And I think God is using us, His people, to spread the Word because He does not want anyone to suffer. So, when I know that I'm doing what God wants me to do, it's just, it's just a part of me. That's where I am. I've not done anything extraordinary. I'm just letting God lead me."

—*Sylvia Taylor sharing words of Helen Catchings*

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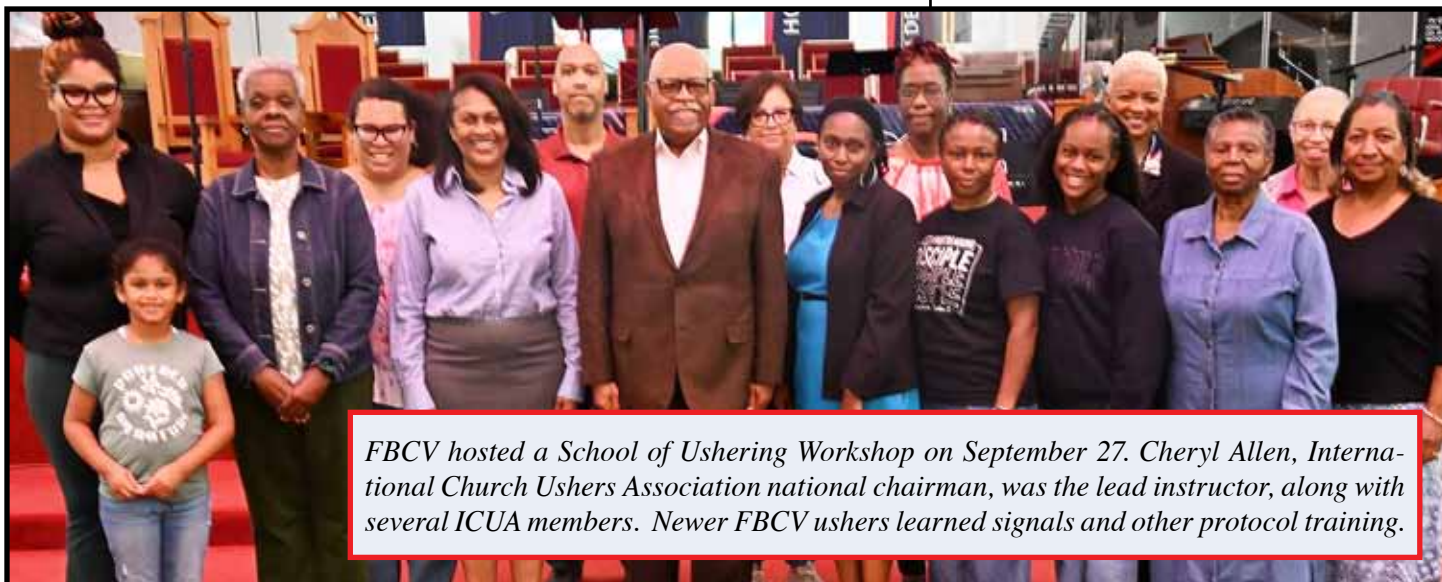
We also look ahead with great anticipation to our 158th Church Anniversary. One hundred fifty-eight years of worship, witness, and work! Through wars and depressions, through social change and spiritual renewal, God has kept this church standing as a light in the community and a beacon of hope for all who enter. We are heirs of a great legacy, and with God's help, we will continue to build upon it for generations to come.

Even as we give thanks, we are mindful of the challenges facing our nation. The government shutdown has left many anxious and uncertain. But we believe in a God who still makes a way where there seems to be no way. Let us continue to pray for our leaders, for our neighbors, and for those who are struggling to make ends meet. Let us be, as Dr. King said, "co-workers with God" in building a beloved community marked by justice, compassion, and peace.

Church, I remain excited about what God is doing in our midst. I see His hand stirring new life among us—strengthening our fellowship, deepening our worship, and expanding our witness. The road ahead may not be easy, but it is filled with promise.

So as we gather around our tables this Thanksgiving, may we do so with hearts full of gratitude, eyes lifted in hope, and hands ready to serve. For the God who brought us through October will surely see us through November—and beyond.

—*With love and thanksgiving, Pas. W*



FBCV hosted a School of Ushering Workshop on September 27. Cheryl Allen, International Church Ushers Association national chairman, was the lead instructor, along with several ICUA members. Newer FBCV ushers learned signals and other protocol training.

SWAP Takes Fellowship on the Road

By Rick Taylor, The Epistle Staff Writer

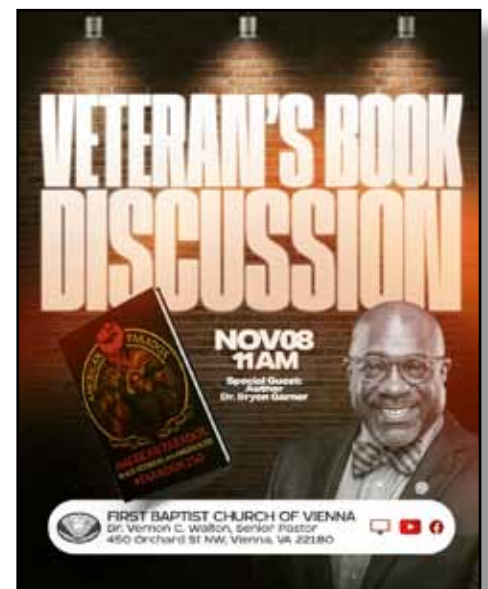
The Seniors With A Purpose Ministry, accompanied by Pastor Vernon C. Walton, literally went great lengths to visit a SWAP member on her birthday.

SWAP Servant Leader Rev. Dr. Emma Valentine, Johnnie Mikel, Jean Denny, Vera Garrant, Kathy Jones, and Jeannie Taylor traveled 232 miles round-trip to Harrisonburg, VA, on October 23 to visit Barbara Taylor at the English Meadows Assisted Facility. They were driven by Transportation Ministry servant leader Kim Stinger.

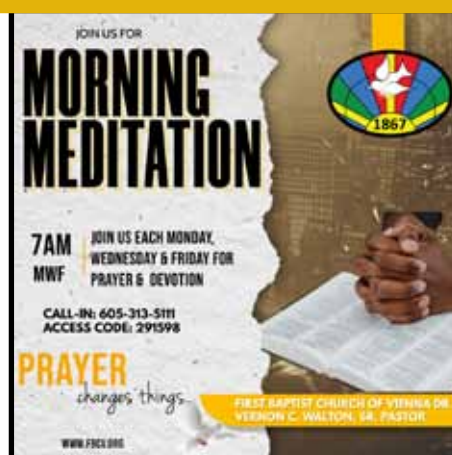
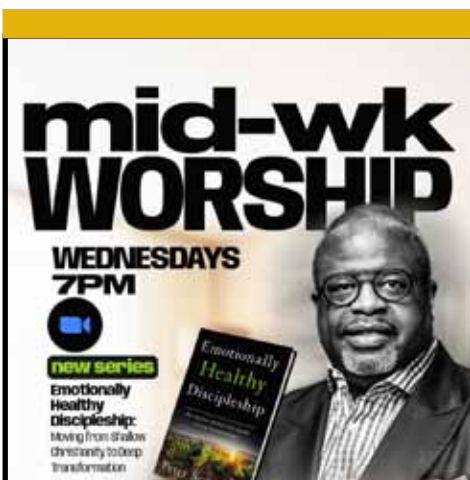
Barbara Taylor, a former Vienna resident, was in SWAP and the Ushers Ministry for several years before moving to an assisted living facility in Ashburn 2 years ago and moving to Harrisonburg this year to be closer to her son. She turned 87 on October 21.

The potluck luncheon was baked chicken, green beans, deviled eggs, macaroni and cheese potato salad and rolls, along with tea and birthday cake.

SWAP members and Pastor Walton sang "Happy Birthday." Next, they went to the lobby and sang several church hymns, led by Kathy Jones on piano and fellowshiped with English Meadows residents. Walton then offered words of encouragement to Barbara Taylor before returning to Vienna.



Barbara Taylor holds flowers while Pastor Walton and SWAP and Transportation Ministry members look on



Spiritual Warfare: Why We Put On the Whole Armor of God

Ephesians 6: 10 – 12 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can make your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Greetings from the brethren of First Baptist Church of Vienna (FBCV) Men's Ministry

Over the weekend of Oct. 17–19, the men of FBCV came together for fellowship, for encouragement, and for inspiration. We went bowling shared food, fellowship and fun with each other at Fairfax Bowl America. Congratulations to DeWayne Corbett for attaining the high score. Young and old, we enjoyed time together and sharing stories between frames.

Saturday morning the brethren gathered early to hear the message on Godliness and why it is superior in all situations. Rev. Keenan Thomas from Shiloh Baptist Church of Fredericksburg, Va brought the Word and the Spirit... challenging us on why we must seek Godliness above all. He asked us, why more Black Men were not in the Church and opting to go to the gym as their refuge? Just a few themes from Rev. Thomas:

- Godliness blesses everything in this age and the age to come.
- Physical Fitness is important, but Godliness has universal and eternal benefits that never fail.
- The only way to be our best as human beings is by drawing closer to God.
- Nearness to God enhances our likeness to God
- Maturity in our Godliness comes from the grace of God and our faith in God.

Following Rev. Thomas, Deacon Julian Purvis led us by breaking up into smaller groups to reflect on the details of Ephesians 6:12–18. Deacon Purvis had us consider:

- Ephesians 6:12—How do we as men of God grow to a place where we stop fighting against the physical presence, such as a single human being, another race, or a co-worker, and truly start to see some of the institutional powers and principalities that are present in 2025. Also to set our prayers and the power we have through the aid of the Holy Spirit.
- Ephesians 6:13–17—Why do we think that the Apostle Paul highlighted “the shield of faith” above all the other parts of the Armor of God, and to whom are we putting our faith in?
- What is the only offensive spiritual weapon that the Apostle Paul highlights? Why are we to trust in this weapon instead of carnal weapons such as guns, cursing, demeaning and backbiting?
- Why do you think the Apostle Paul is instructing us to not only humbly pray as part of spiritual warfare, but also to be watchful and to pray always!

Deacon Lamont Ruffin asked us to describe prayer to the young men in attendance. This was an incredibly meaningful way for us to close our time together and prepare for Men's Day Sunday service. Deacon Andre Carpenter FBCV's Men's Ministry Spiritual Leader closed us as he opened us in prayer.

Sunday, Oct. 19 we completed our Men's Weekend with the message from Rev. Shawn T. Wallace Senior Pastor at St. John's Baptist Church of Plainfield, New Jersey. Rev. Wallace's message was titled “ON FIRE” and he most certainly was on fire for our Lord. Here are his main points:

- God Controls the Narrative
- God causes collaborations.
- God commands the explicative.
- God commissions the receptive.

In the end, the Men's Ministry seeks to make us more like King David “A man after God's own heart” by helping us to be men who:

- Prioritize God's Will
- Possess repentant spirits
- Seek God's guidance
- Have integrity
- Love and serve others and desire to do God's Will

We thank the Hospitality Ministry for their support of our weekend and the delicious breakfast they provided. We also thank Minister of Music Kwan McKnight for his inspiring virtuosity in getting us in the right spirit from the start. Finally, we thank Stacey Seay and Jaelin Mitchell for all their administrative support from start to finish. You are all a blessing and we appreciate you more than mere words can say. —*Sinclair Harris, Servant Leader Men's Ministry*



Deacon Michael Clinton to celebrate the birthday of his wife, Celia Clinton, and the birthday of his daughter, Felicia Clinton.

DeArmond “Dee Dee” Carter and family to commemorate the 96th birthday of their father, grandfather, great-grand father, and great-great grandfather, Charles Carter.

Lenora and Robin Barnes to commemorate the birthday of their grandmother, Roxie Barnes, and the birthday of their aunt, Roxanne Barnes.

Compiled by Ceola Allen

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS

MINISTRY UPDATE

November Theme: Faith. Focus. Fellowship.

Let's be honest—we all have moments when we wrestle with insecurity. We wonder if we're capable, worthy, or seen. But here's the truth: God doesn't call the most confident — He calls the most willing.

When David stood before Goliath, he didn't have the size or the armor—but he had faith.

When Moses stood before Pharaoh, he didn't have eloquence—but he had God's presence.

And when you stand before your challenges, you may not feel qualified—but you have God's power.

Don't let insecurity convince you that you're disqualified. God's choice of you was never based on your perfection—it was based on His purpose. You may feel uncertain, but you're still chosen. You may not have it all together, but God's hand is still on your life.

So, when you find yourself asking, "What now?"—remember this: Now is the time to trust God more deeply than ever before.

Faith & Fitness Walk

We're moving with purpose! Join us for our Faith & Fitness Walk on Saturday, Nov. 8 as we gather for prayer, fellowship, and physical activity. This is more than just a walk—it's an act of faith! As we take each step, we're reminded that spiritual endurance and physical discipline go hand in hand. Bring a friend, your favorite sneakers, and a heart ready to connect.

"Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." — Hebrews 12:1

Youth Lock-In

Get ready for one unforgettable night! Our Youth Lock-In will be held Friday, Nov. 14 through Saturday, Nov. 15, and it's going to be a powerful time of fun, fellowship, and faith. Expect games, food, music, real talk,

and worship—all centered around strengthening our connection to God and one another. It's a chance to laugh, learn, and leave refreshed. Bring your friends and an open heart. God is going to meet us there!

Young Adult Bible Study Kickoff

We're launching a brand-new four week Bible Study Series via Zoom titled "What Now?" starting Tuesday, Nov. 18. This series will focus on navigating life's uncertainties and overcoming insecurities through the truth of God's Word.

We all face moments where we question if we're enough, smart enough, spiritual enough, confident enough. But God's answer to every insecurity is clear: You are enough because I am with you.

This study will help us unpack our identity, strengthen our faith, and learn how to walk boldly even when we don't have all the answers.

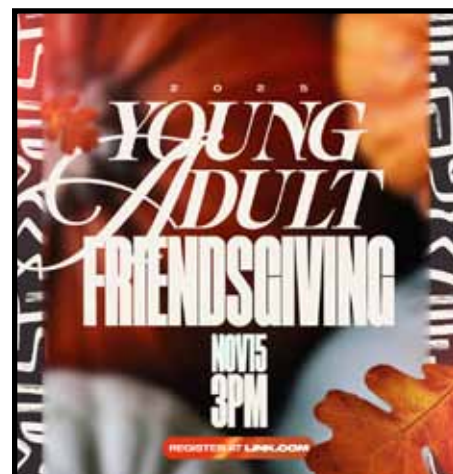
Young Adult Friendsgiving Gathering

Let's come together to celebrate friendship, faith, and gratitude! Our Young Adult Friendsgiving on Saturday, Nov. 22 will be a time to relax, eat, and enjoy community. Bring your favorite dish, your thankful heart, and your best stories—because we have so much to give God thanks for.

This November, let's walk in faith, build community, and embrace the truth that our confidence comes from Christ alone. Whether you're walking in the Faith & Fitness event, staying up all night at the Lock-In, or sharing a plate at Friendsgiving—know that you belong here, and God is doing something incredible in you.

Stay connected. Stay consistent. Stay confident—because you were made for this season.

— Min. Kennard Jones



November

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
OF VIENNA**
450 Orchard St. N.W., Vienna,
Virginia 22180
(703) 938-8525 • www.fbcv.org
Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Pastor

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	3 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:30 pm The Call Out Family Prayer Call	4 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study	5 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	6 7:00 am Prayer Call	7 7:00 am Prayer Call	8 Veterans Book Talk Youth Faith & Fitness Hike
9 Birth Month Celebration 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	10 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:30 pm The Call Out Family Prayer Call	11 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study	12 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	13	14 Youth Lock-In 7:00 am Prayer Call	15 Youth Lock-In
16 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	17 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:30 pm The Call Out Family Prayer Call	18 11:00 am Mid-Day Bible Study 7:00 pm Young Adult Bible Study	19 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	20	21 7:00 am Prayer Call	22 Thanksgiving Basket Distribution Young Adult Friendsgiving
23 Seasoned Saints Sunday 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	24 7:00 am Prayer Call 7:30 pm The Call Out Family Prayer Call	25	26 7:00 am Prayer Call	27 Thanksgiving	28 7:00 am Prayer Call	29 Community Thanksgiving Dinner
30 9:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship						

"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