

FEBRUARY 2022

The Epistle

First Baptist Church of Vienna, Va. | The Resilient Church!



From
**Pastor
Walton's
Desk**

Grace and Peace
from God our Father!

It is hard to believe we have started and concluded our annual fast and time of consecration. I want to thank all of you who made a commitment to draw closer to God and get clarity and understanding surrounding his will. On Consecration Sunday, I asked that you consider what your offering of service would be for the year. It is now decision time. If you have not made this consideration or commitment, I encourage you to do so. Now is the time to commit, recommit, or solidify your place in ministry. This year we don't want to simply give of our resources. We also want to give of our time and talents as well. There will be several avenues of service in which you can use your gifts this year. Some of these include, greeters, digital disciples, sound and media, missions projects, and opportunities to work with our youth. It is my hope and prayer you have identified one or more of these areas to serve and be a blessing. The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Let's demonstrate our

Pastor, continued on page 2

New Dean of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association, Commission of Christian Education Appointed

By Andrea B Logan, Epistle Staff Writer

BCV is pleased to announce that our very own Rev. Dr. Emma Valentine has been selected as the new Dean of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association, Commission of Christian Education. After being a part of the Association for over 25 years, Dr. Valentine was approached this past December and asked to consider the appointment. "I need to pray about it," was her initial

New dean, continued on page 5



BLACK & WHITE THROUGH THE PASTORS *Lens*

REV BECCA MESSMAN
BURKE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

DR VERNON C. WALTON
FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2022 @ 2:00 PM

Pastor, continued from page 1

resilience by recommitting to the work of Christ.

Looking ahead, February is also exciting because it is a month of celebration! We will kick off Black History Month with “Through the Pastor’s Lens.” I will be sitting down with Rev. Becca Messman of Burke Presbyterian to discuss race, reconciliation, healing and action. This will be interactive, so you will be able to ask questions in real time in person and online. We will also bring in community servants and elected officials for discourse around local issues here in Fairfax County for Justice and Legislative observance. Finally, we will conclude with Heritage Sunday which is scheduled for 4th Sunday. You can participate by wearing your African attire in person or online. My desire is to celebrate our rich heritage and culture while also understanding that we have work to do to keep our community moving forward.

There is so much to be grateful for this month and many opportunities to express that gratitude. Let’s go higher and continue to show that we are, indeed, the resilient church!

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Special February Days



Black History Month

Boy Scout Sunday:
February 8

Valentine’s Day:
February 14

Presidents’ Day:
February 21

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA

VACCINE CLINIC Ages 12+

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST COVID-19

Dose 1, 2, & 3 and boosters are available for approved groups.

GET YOUR VACCINE NOW

Schedule your appointment here:
<https://tinyurl.com/fbcvclinic2>

NEED ASSISTANCE?

We are available to assist with scheduling your appointment. Simply call or email!

Email: fbcvhealth@fbcv.org
Call: 703/938-8525

APPOINTMENT TIMES

Thursday, February 10, 2022
3:00 - 7:00 PM

LOCATION

First Baptist Church of Vienna
450 Orchard St. NW
Vienna, VA 22180
www.fbcv.org

Justice

SUNDAY

FEBRUARY 13
10:00 AM

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA
DR. VERNON C. WALTON, SENIOR PASTOR



Marriage Matters

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18 | 7:00 PM

with special guests
Dr. J Lawrence Turner and Bridgette Turner
Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church / Memphis TN

Register Today! | tinyurl.com/fbcvmarriagematters



"Forget about what's happened; don't keep going over old history. Be alert, be present. I'm about to do something brand-new. It's bursting out! Don't you see it? There it is! I'm making a road through the desert, rivers in the badlands." Isaiah 43:18-19

Welcome to the book of your life. The series of pages on the old year has (finally!) turned and we have begun a brand-new year. Last year was filled with a variety of experiences. A combination of joys and sorrows, goals met and goals missed, ups and downs, but now this is all behind us.

Typically, New Year's Day can be just another holiday. For us it's a time of reflection and reimagining.

Revelation 21:5 states the following: "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, 'Write: for these words are true and faithful.'"

We are a resilient Church and we are looking forward to being God's church.

As we look ahead, we press forward to February where we celebrate, commemorate, and cherish our ancestors. As we have in the past, we plan to celebrate through music; but expect something new.

The church, the ministry is not an island to itself. We need your support. Right now, we are seeking just two to three persons who are interested in interning or learning about Video, Audio, or Media. If you know of someone who has what it takes to assist us in doing ministry in a new way in 2022, please have them reach out to the church office.

As always, we are super grateful for all of your prayers and support during this next season of ministry.

—Kwan McKnight



HERITAGE SUNDAY

FEB 27 | 10 AM

Guest Preacher:
Dr. Kenyatta R. Gilbert
Homiletics Professor
Howard University Divinity School

IN-PERSON + ONLINE
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF VIENNA
Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Senior Pastor
450 Orchard St NW, Vienna, VA 22180



I Remember When: A Collection of Treasured Senior Memories

By Shirley McCoy, Epistle Staff Writer

As I was clearing out my file cabinet recently, I came across the souvenir book for the 100th anniversary of my childhood church, Bethel Baptist, in Luray, Virginia, which was organized in 1883. What a delight it was to read the history and see the pictures of so many legends of the church who I knew growing up. Unfortunately, beyond the pictures and captions in this souvenir program, and my own memories, there is nothing that captures the stories of Miss Martha and Miss Emma, who walked to church together every Sunday, sat in the same seats, and dominated the missionaries and Blue Ribbon Club; or Miss Mary, who drove a huge Ford to church and whose money paid for many a bill at the church, and many others. What a joy it would be, years later, to share their stories and pictures from the days when women (and young girls) never came to church without hats, their good coats and shoes, and gloves; and men never came without a suit and a tie (overalls/jeans were for work). How awesome to see through their eyes the times when crushes were met at BYPU (Baptist Young Peoples' Union) on Sunday evening, or at some small-town BYPU Convention, or at the church picnic at the Creek (watermelons cooling in the water), and getting a mesh bag of oranges, hard candy, and an apple at the Christmas Day program.

While the church played a huge part in the histories of many of our seniors, as time moved on and the world kept changing, other influences began to shape life and memories such as family units and traditions, the political scene of the time, schooling, work, and community life in general. These all made for history and memories. The SWAP (Seniors with a Purpose) Ministry wants to permanently record that history and those memories in a storybook of the seniors of this church. How interesting it will be to see and experience the world changes through their eyes, giving us a glimpse of then and now.

This project is not a collection of autobiographies or biographies. It will be a collection of short stories--reflections of their lives that they want to share. We cannot tell it all in this book. However, we hope to get a picture of their life experiences, community life and, perhaps, the progressive growth of the church known as First Baptist Church of Vienna. We want to be able to tell their stories in interesting ways that the reader will enjoy and want to share with the younger generation.

The writing team has people assigned to interview seniors ages 75+. Perhaps you have already been called by a member of the team to schedule an interview. If you have not responded to them, please do. Participation in this project is voluntary. However, we want everyone who is qualified to be included if they wish to be, so if you have not been contacted, please contact Johnnie Mikel. Team members will make two contacts- one by email and one by phone. If no response, they will conclude that you do not wish to be included. If you need more information, please contact Johnnie Mikel at runnerjmb@aol.com.

Missions Moment

Last year the First Baptist Church of Vienna exemplified "being the church," through missions and outreach and 2022 will be no different! Throughout the year we will be providing opportunities to serve our community through activities targeted to youth, seniors, and those facing housing and food insecurity. Further, we will continue to address issues of justice and equity throughout our community. Opportunities to serve on various projects will be published throughout the year, so please keep an eye out for chances to share your gift as we do this important work.

This year our Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration was postponed due to the potential for bad weather. During this service, all of the offering collected is typically designated to our missions fund and the celebration serves as the first opportunity of the year to give toward missions. If you haven't yet given toward missions this year, prayerfully consider making a gift of any size. Your gift helps ensure that we can continue meeting needs and changing lives. —Stacey Seay



Sonya Ayler and family
for the loss of her father,
Herbert Munn, Sr.

Jackie Brown and Calvin Brown
and family for the loss of
her granddaughter and his daughter,
Sharika Moore

Morris Mack and family
for the loss of his mother,
Thelma Mack

Brenda Wynn and family
for the loss of her sister,
Anna Brown Weathers



response. She began her service in the association under past moderator, the late Rev. Dr. Kenny Smith, serving as the area-Vice-President of Area D&E for the Women's Ministry and District Chair of the of the Baptist General Convention (BGC).

After consulting Pastor Walton for spiritual guidance and after much prayer, Dr. Valentine accepted the role, as the newly appointed Dean of the Association. Dr. Emma shares that Pastor Walton's phrase to "just be present" encouraged her to not only be present but to "push the envelope further as "it pays off when we are obedient to HIM."

When asked what she would bring to the organization in her new role, Dr. Valentine had this to say, "Serving as the new Dean of the Northern Virginia Baptist Association, Commission of Christian Education will allow me to bring fresh wine to the organization by offering new ideas that will continue to grow our ministry as we operate in our "new norm."

In the Academy of Christian Education, she has earned five degrees and several certificates to include, the Academy of Christian training, and a master's degree in Christian Education, Dr. Valentine is more than qualified for this role of providing guidance and equipping her team to fulfill the educational needs of the Association. Dr. Valentine also graduated from the National Baptist Congress of Christian Education and was accredited by the American Baptist College in Nashville, TN (the school that the late Congressman John Lewis attended) as a Certified Dean. Being a Certified Dean affords Dr. Valentine the opportunity to serve anywhere in the country as a Dean.

Dr. Valentine shared that she serves a sovereign God and bears witness to the fact, God will make room for our gifts. He requires us to stay at his feet and look to Him.

One of Dr. Valentine's favorite scriptures' is Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do [no matter what it is], In word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in His Person, giving praise to God the Father through Him." This scripture is etched in her heart for guidance.

Dr. Valentine believes that one must be faithful to God and not compromising your witness. Lastly, she is mostly motivated and encouraged by seeing the move of God in the lives of others.



FOR EVERYTHING THERE
IS A SEASON, A TIME
FOR EVERY ACTIVITY
UNDER HEAVEN.

ECCLESIASTES 3:1, NLT

A promotional graphic for Christian Learning Academy (CLA) Online. It features a blue mug of coffee and an open Bible. The text "CHRISTIAN CLA ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY" is displayed in a circular logo. The text "Sundays at 8:00 am" is in the top right. The website "www.tinyurl.com/fbcvadultCLA" and Meeting ID "822 2496 7849" and Passcode "176915" are listed. The bottom of the graphic includes the logo of the First Baptist Church of Vienna and the text "First Baptist Church of Vienna | Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Sr. Pastor 450 Orchard St. NW | Vienna, VA | www.fbcv.org".



THE DISCIPLES CORNER: Growing Toward Biblical Literacy

In a study conducted by the Barna Group and related to an article about how America is starving itself, the article records in its reading “The Crisis of Biblical Illiteracy and What We Can Do About It,” for Biola University’s magazine, Berding described the problem as a famine. And he’s not being overly alarmist, he maintained.

“Christians used to be known as ‘people of one book.’ They memorized it, meditated on it, talked about it and taught it to others,” he wrote. “We don’t do that anymore, and in a very real sense we’re starving ourselves to death.” “If I sound alarmist, I’m not alone. These days many of us don’t even know basic facts about the Bible.”

According to the 2014 “The State of the Bible” report by Barna Group and American Bible Society, a majority of U.S. adults (81 percent) said they consider themselves highly, moderately, or somewhat knowledgeable about the Bible. Yet less than half (43 percent) were able to name the first five books of the Bible. The statistics are like the previous 2013 report, which also showed that only half knew that John the Baptist was not one of the 12 apostles. Kenneth Berding a New Testament professor at Biola’s Talbot School of Theology believes that Christians are to read the bible so frequently that they think about how to use in every-

thing, every day.” I am inclined to agree, that we are starving ourselves to death. We must improve our knowledge of scripture and it uses, get into the habit of studying, expanding our base of information, and applying the Word of God to our daily situations. However, there is hope. As of January 2021, a reported 95-million American adults are exploring scripture, and many for the first time according to the current State of the Bible Report. The proportion of American adults who never use the Bibles has fallen to 29 percent the lowest since 2019.

Everything we need to know about our faith, growing to be a better person, discovering how the hear the voice of God, and learning how to keep out of harm’s way, comes from reading, understanding, and applying Scripture to our day-to-day activities. We may or may not realize it, but who we are and what we do as Christians is filtered through the prism of our faith and religious beliefs. We often do not see or understand that our filter could be an emotion, a thought, or experience. We weigh the thought of our actions against not what Bible says, but what outcome we may exact or what other people expect from us. Take for example the Christian who is deciding to relocate for a job. They are married with children, and they filter the process of relocating based on a previous experience. The emotional toll of a parent when they were younger

always gone for work, or late, or missing from family functions, can render the believer helpless in their decision-making. The sheer anxiety of such as feeling leads to seeing a blessed opportunity as a curse. The sense of causing abandonment or a feeling of abandonment in others will overshadow the good that would come from the relocation. You see we may not be able to always explain why we do what we do, but we realize that a different outcome may have transpired if we had used the word of God on which to base our decision. Consider a different outcome if scripture was applied. The word records that “all things are possible to them that believe” or “all things work together for the good of those who love the Lord and who are called according to His purpose.” So rather than think about the decision-making and outcome as a negative, align your life and choices to what you learn from studying the word of God. If you are uncertain how to walk-out the choices you need to make in life, consider staying in the study of the word through a Connection Group (tinyurl.com/fb-cvgroups), joining the 8a.m. Sunday morning CLA (Christian Learning Academy), and engaging in the Mid-Week Bible Study Series. Let’s be the biblically literate church that God has called us to be. —Dr. Jacquie Hood Martin, Director of Discipleship & Ministry Formation

You'll Be Missed!

Dear Pastor Walton and First Baptist Church Family

With bittersweet sorrow, John and I will soon say farewell to our First Baptist Church Vienna Family. Our house is under contract, and the new home complete. Therefore, we are planning to move on February 10th. If all goes well, we will be in service until Feb. 6.



It has been a tremendous blessing to serve for 25-plus years at First Baptist Church. We have been ushers and youth usher coordinators. We have also been members of Vacation Bible School, Church School, Women's Ministry, New Members Ministry, Evangelism Ministry, and many committees and projects over the years. And on that journey, we have met so many people who will forever be a part of our lives no matter where we go.

However, we believe that this time during the pandemic allowed many of us to sit down and talk to God about what we should consider going into our golden years. John and I have always liked the ocean, and we were blessed to stumble upon a new development for active adults in Bethany Beach, Delaware, which seems a perfect fit for us in our retirement years.

It's hard to leave so many of you that we love and truly consider family. Both of us are from Pennsylvania (different parts of the state), but such a move puts us closer to family and in between our children who still live in Virginia. Please know that we are just a phone call away and or a 2 and 1/2-hour drive. Just like here, our doors will always be open. We plan to keep the same cell phone numbers, but I will get the word to all of you if we must change numbers. And, of course, there's always Facebook! Thank you all for always being here for us as a family and allowing us to be a part of your lives!

We wish you good health and much success as God continues to move you forward and bless the many ministries and members of the First Baptist Church of Vienna. We love this church and all that is within it. If there is anything that you need us to do before we leave, please don't hesitate to reach out. To God be the Glory for The Wonderful Things He Has Done!

Warmest Regards and God's Blessings,
Connie and John Bails

College Connection

COLLEGE CONNECTION PRAYER CIRCLE

The College Connection Ministry is praying for you. During our monthly ministry meeting, College Connection lifts your needs in prayer. College Connection students should submit their prayer requests for the month of February to Sister Benita Parks (benitaparks@verizon.net) by Feb. 10. Parents are also welcome to submit prayer requests on their child's behalf. We look forward to hearing from and praying for you.

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

May God's blessings be upon you today and every day. May you be guided by His love for you and find comfort in His care. May you grow to know and love Him more each day. Amen

Happy Birthday to our February Scholar, **Mitchell Colter**, a freshman at the University of Dayton.

ATTENTION HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Are you a high school senior class of 2022 who has already been accepted to a college or university or has declared your school of choice for the fall of 2022? If so, College Connection wants to know. Send an email with the information below to Sis. Arnitra Duckett (arnitrad@mac.com):

1. Full Name
2. Graduation Date
3. Colleges/Universities you have applied to
4. Intended Major (and minor, if applicable)

We will share this wonderful news with your FBCV family.

It's not too late...We Want to Hear from You... Your First Baptist Family would love to hear from you. Share with us how your first semester of school has been, any major accomplishments, and other college experiences.

Join Us for Our Next Meeting. The College Connection Ministry meeting for this month is scheduled for Feb.15 at 7 p.m. We have been meeting virtually. Please send Sis. Arnitra Duckett an email (arnitrad@mac.com).to request the contact information for our next meeting.

FBCV Member Brittney Crosby Recognized with National Award for Excellence

Brittney Crosby spent the summer of 2021 working in the New York City office of Peppercomm, a public relations agency founded by stand-up comedian Steve Cody that prides itself on relationships “built through laughter.”

Brittney Crosby won her first public speaking award at age six. In fifth grade, her essay was selected for a Veterans Day assembly. By 13, she had emceed a pageant for her mom’s sorority. When it comes to communications, she’s a natural.

Now, the Old Dominion University (ODU) senior has received national recognition for her work as an aspiring public relations professional. Crosby is the 2021-2022 recipient of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) Lawrence G. Foster Award for Excellence in Public Relations, providing \$1,500 of funding related to her studies.

Crosby, who serves as president of the ODU chapter of the Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA), has approached her collegiate career like an architect, laying a strong foundation for her professional future.

“I don’t know how she juggles everything. Being PRSSA president is like adding a job on top of her other responsibilities,” said Brendan O’Hallarn, a lecturer in public affairs and media relations who serves as faculty advisor to PRSSA. “But just about every time I task her with something for the organization—which is often—she’s already on top of it, along with the three other things I’ve forgotten.”

Crosby’s secret to success as an undergraduate: “show up.”

The Loudoun County native first toured ODU during a church field trip when she was 14. Based on that visit, she determined the University was where she was meant to be. “It’s the only school I applied to,” she said.

In public relations, she found a perfect fit for her strengths in writing and public speaking.

“I didn’t know much about PR when I arrived at ODU, but I wanted to participate in more clubs and activities on campus,” she said. “PRSSA stood out to me because it was a professional development club that would connect me to resources, like networking and internships. All I had to do is show up, and then opportunities began to fall in my lap. So I took them!”

Through PRSSA, Crosby has been able to connect with public relations professionals in Hampton Roads, attend virtual conferences and apply what she’s learning to encourage students to participate in the organization.

When seeking part-time work, Crosby found an on-campus job that adds relevant knowledge to her resume. She works as a public relations student associate in the Webb Center, gaining experience in the day-to-day promotion of

the facility through social media. She takes pictures, brainstorms content ideas and creates analytics reports to measure how social media posts are performing.

After attending the virtual PRSSA ICON conference in 2020, she wanted to work closely with public relations professionals before she collects a diploma this spring. Crosby identified intriguing agencies and did her homework, using Google and social media to learn more about their cultures, clients and employees. Through LinkedIn, she reached out to employees who managed recruitment and asked about available internships.

Her work paid off when she connected with the chief talent officer for Peppercomm. After two interviews, she was hired to spend the summer of 2021 working in its New York City office. Crosby helped research media outlets and journalists, strategize for client projects and conduct influencer outreach.

“My job description kept growing based on what I could handle,” she said. “I was proactive about asking for opportunities to try new things.”

“I realized we are always learning things in the classroom that can be leveraged,” she said.

As she prepares to graduate, Crosby is thinking about what new skills she’d like to learn or industries she’d want to explore. In the fall, she started researching potential agencies for post-graduate internships, possibly in fashion, luxury goods, real estate or entertainment.

When she entered the competition for the Foster Award, she was asked to define excellence in public relations. Over the course of the pandemic, Crosby said she discovered a “newfound appreciation” for her focus and drive to make the most of every experience.

“I’ve found the best way I can achieve what I want is to be what I’ve identified as ‘unapologetically bold,’” she wrote in her winning essay. “Being unapologetically bold means that I take initiative, speak my mind and own my words, because living my truth and owning who I am is something no one can take away from me.”

— By Amber Kennedy

https://www.odu.edu/news/2022/1/brittney_crosby_#.Yfr-15J5KjOa



Money Matters: Financial Health

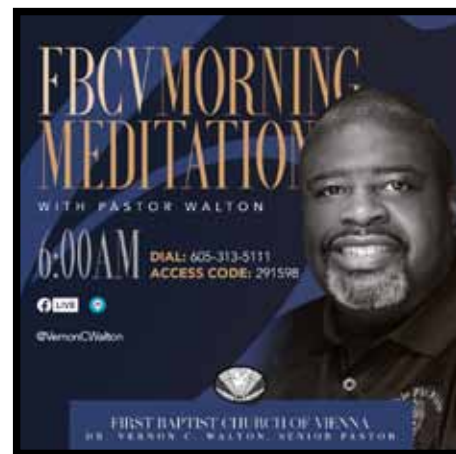
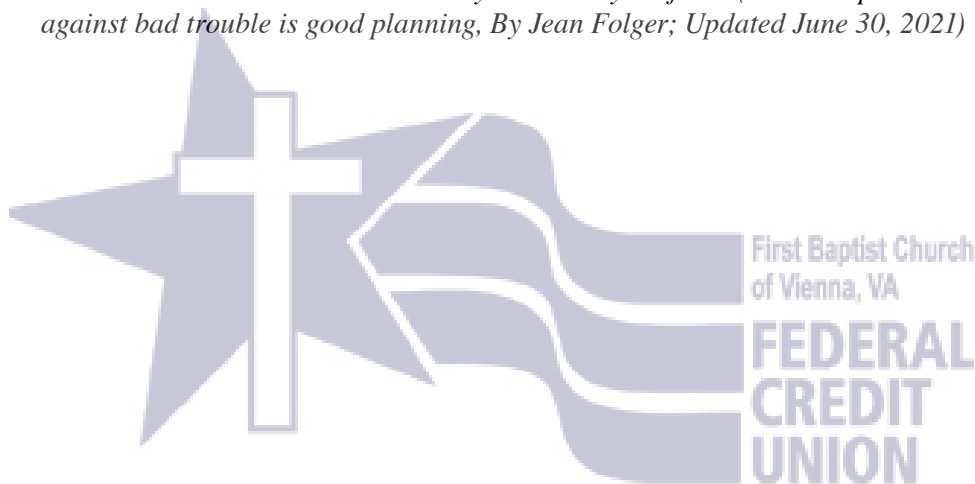
It's easier to respond and adapt to an emergency when you're prepared. For starters, take a look at your financial health. Pay attention to your income, savings, investments, net worth, and debt. If you're like most people, you have room for improvement when it comes to your financial health. Here are a few things to work on:

- **Make a budget** and stick to it. People usually know how much money they have coming in, but it can be a shock to see where your money goes. Find ways to cut your costs, if possible. Think: Do I really need that? Do I have something already that I could use instead? Do I want this more than I want to be financially stable?
- **Save and invest** a certain percentage of your income every month. Put it in your budget to help make it happen, and review your progress each year. Even though it's never too late to start, your money has more time to grow if you start early. And remember, economic downturns are temporary. Think long-term, and do not panic. Be convinced that the best times to invest even more are these times. If you have extra money, invest it, and most importantly, do not sell your investments at those times.
- **Organize your important documents** so you know where to find them in an emergency. Consider putting your hard-to-replace documents, collectibles, and heirlooms in a safe deposit box. Since you can't access a safe deposit box 24/7, however, don't put anything in it that you might need in a hurry—such as a passport or the only copy of a living will, advanced medical directive, or durable power of attorney.
- **Improve your credit score.** During a recession, lenders favor the strongest borrowers. You will have access to better terms and rates if you have a higher credit score.
- **Designate a financial power of attorney** who can make financial decisions on your behalf if you're physically or mentally unable to handle your affairs.

Emergency Fund

Financial planners recommend that you should set aside three to six months' worth of living expenses in an emergency fund. If you're able to, it's a good idea to save even more. Keep in mind that your emergency fund should be used only in a true emergency—such as to make ends meet when you're unemployed, recovering from a natural disaster, or need to pay medical bills.

If you need assistance in evaluating or working on your financial health or creating an emergency fund, please feel free to contact your First Baptist Church Federal Credit Union —*Submitted by Willie Boykin from (The best protection against bad trouble is good planning, By Jean Folger; Updated June 30, 2021)*



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

450 Orchard St. N.W.,
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Dr. Vernon C. Walton, Pastor