

JUNE 2023

The

Epistle

First Baptist Church of Vienna, Va. | "Fruit Bearing Disciples"



From
Pastor
Walton's
Desk

*Grace and Peace from
God our Father!*

I first have to thank you all for your kindness and generosity during my anniversary. You truly made this pastor's heart smile. I am grateful for each of you and look forward to all that God will do in the years to come.

As we forge ahead into the summer months, there is still work to do. This year is filled with opportunities for us to continue demonstrating what it means to be fruitful. Our annual Juneteenth event is in need of volunteers to handle everything from traffic and parking to set up and tear down. We also have opportunities with our Summer Camp sessions in June and July as well as Christmas in July. These outreach events are ways we can demonstrate our commitment to community and the transformation of God's people. For these events to be impactful, we need your help and prayerful participation. With your assistance, I believe people will experience the love of Christ in an up close and personal way.

PASTOR, continued on page 2

Conversations and Q&A with **WOMEN OF THE MOVEMENT**

Willie Pearl Mackey King
Worked with Dr. King
SCLC

Joan Trumpauer Mulholland
Civil Rights Activist and
Member of Delta Sigma Theta

Dr. Vernon C. Walton

**JUNE 14
7:00 PM**

Worship Through Giving

Our first All Christians Tithe (ACT) Month will take place in July. During that time, each of us is challenged to commit to giving ten percent of their income (tithe). If you already tithe, you are encouraged to stretch yourself by giving beyond the tithe. We will be providing resources through out the month of June that will help us prepare our hearts and minds to commit to this challenge.

TITHE MONTH, continued on page 2

PASTOR, continued from page 1

Finally, as we continue to be Fruit Bearing Disciples, we will shift our focus to the next practice, which is extravagant generosity. It is because of your obedience and generosity that we are able to do what we do. I am asking each of us to make the commitment to tithe. Tithing is committing 10% of your income to the Lord's house. It is my hope and prayer that we all commit through entire month of July. On first Sunday, we will observe ACTS (All Christians Tithe) Sunday. If you have not been a tither, this is an opportunity for you to start. If you have been a consistent tither, I ask that you take this opportunity to reach beyond the tithe. In our quest to be a fruit bearing congregation, we must demonstrate Christian Character and generosity as a part of that. Your gifts make a difference by making ministry possible.

I am in anticipation of how God will move in the life of our church as we make these commitments in character, in service and in worship. He honors commitment and I believe that our lives will be enriched individually and collectively as we grow in the grace of God. I encourage your participation in this season of ministry. Let's grow together!



TITHE MONTH, continued from page 1

Why Should You Accept the Challenge?

Though some of us may have drifted away from it, as Christians, we are all called to tithe. Pastor Brian Kluth identifies 10 reasons we should tithe:

1. It is a proven pattern of giving done by Christ's followers.
2. It will give the Lord first place in your life.
3. It will bring God's wisdom and order to finances.
4. It will serve as a practical reminder that God is the owner of everything in your life.
5. It will allow you to experience God as your provider.
6. It will encourage your spiritual growth and trust in God.
7. It will ensure you of treasure in heaven.
8. It will strengthen the work and outreach of your local church.
9. It will help provide the means to keep your pastoral staff in full-time Christian Service.
10. It will help accomplish needed building projects and renovations.

We will explore many of these reasons in greater depth through our daily devotional readings, tithing testimonies and more. Later in the month, we will complete a covenant card to affirm our commitment to taking part in our July ACTS month. Let's trust God to stretch us through this process.

Juneteenth: A Second Independence Day

Cheryl Janey Calhoun
Epistle Staff Writer

Juneteenth is a federal holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States. While slavery actually ended January 1, 1863, by President Abraham Lincoln by the Emancipation Proclamation, not everyone in the Confederate Territory would immediately set free. The news of freedom took two and a half more years for the news to reach the faraway Texas Territory where, on June 19, 1865, a Union general, along with 2000 troops, charged with implementing reconstruction issued an order informing all Texans that enslaved people had been freed. The name Juneteenth is derived from combining 'June' and 'nineteenth' and is observed on June 19th.

Many in the Americans now view Juneteenth as a second independence day. Celebrations marking Juneteenth began in black churches and homes in the 1860's and have grown larger and more mainstream over the years. In 2021, President Joe Biden signed into law a bill making Juneteenth a federal holiday. Juneteenth has taken on even more importance in recent years in the wake of police treatment of black people and the formation of the Black Lives Matter movement. Juneteenth creates wide focus on issues important to black people.

First Baptist began celebrating Juneteenth prior to the pandemic. Begun as a Church effort, the Town of Vienna has embraced Juneteenth and has actively supported the celebration and been a part of the Church's celebration. The outdoor Juneteenth event includes vendors, speakers from throughout the greater Vienna community and neighbors joining together in celebration and highlighting the importance of African Americans to the country.

This year's celebration will be held on Saturday, June 17, from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. Our keynote speaker for the opening ceremony is Dr. Gregory Washington, the current president of George Mason University. This year's event will include live entertainment throughout the day with Common Ground headlining our musical entertainment. There will be community organizations, vendors, a free photo booth, free rides and food trucks on site. The James H. Hayes Elks Lodge has partnered with us and our Classic Car and Truck Show will be on their grounds.

There will be shuttle service between First Baptist and the Elks Lodge. Whether you plan to be a vendor, volunteer to serve during the event, or just plan to attend, you won't want to miss this day of celebration.



JUNE 18

**Happy
Father's
Day**

Missions and Outreach Updates

A special thanks to all who committed to representing First Baptist Church of Vienna during our participation in Viva Vienna. Whether you welcomed people at our booth or passed out invite cards as you walked around, we are grateful for your willingness to give of your time.

Our food distributions have continued to bless families and students throughout the area. Our monthly produce distributions have been experiencing a much greater demand, but thanks to the support of our members and volunteers, we have increased the number of produce bags to 600 per distribution (over 13,000 pounds of fresh produce). We have also partnered with Reston Strong to provide even more produce for the families we serve. Our next food sorting day is Thursday, June 8th at 10:00 am and our next food distribution day is on Saturday, June 10th. We are always in need of more hands, so please take some time to commit to these efforts. You can sign up at: <https://tinyurl.com/fbcvbearsfruit>

We will be doing a food distribution on the second Saturday in July so please mark your calendars to assist next month as well.

We are also preparing for our summer missions and outreach events and will need your support to help ensure that they will be all that God would have them to be. Mark your calendars and sign up to serve our community through outreach and missions:

Juneteenth – Saturday, June 17th

<https://tinyurl.com/fbcvjuneteenth23>

**Christmas in July – Sunday,
July 30th**

<https://tinyurl.com/fbcvchristmasjuly>

**Manassas African American Heritage
Festival – Saturday, August 5th**

<https://tinyurl.com/fbcvmanassas23>



Youth and Young Adult Update

A new month is here and with it comes a new opportunity for your youth and young adults to make a difference – in their homes, schools, and in their community. They need our encouragement and prayers to help them push through the obstacles around them and become the person God wants them to be. Here's some AMAZING opportunities coming up that will help you as a parent, challenge our youth and young adults, and I hope encourage both of you as you journey this new month together.

JUNE: YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT CALENDAR

- 2nd: Young Adult Open Mic Night @ 7 p.m.
- 3rd: Youth Choir Rehearsal @ 10 a.m.
- 8th: Parent Nation Meeting via Zoom @ 6:30 p.m.
- 10th: Youth Choir Rehearsal @ 10 a.m.
- 11th: Youth Day Worship Service @ 10 a.m.
- 15th: Young Adult Check-in via Zoom @ 7 p.m.
- **The Call Out: Youth Prayer Call at 7:30 p.m. (Every Monday)
- **Youth and Children Connection Groups @ 7 p.m. (Every Tuesday)

ANNUAL YOUTH DAY

Be sure to join us for our annual Youth Day! Our youth will be taking over the worship experience so be sure to join us June 11th at 10am. Our guest preacher will be Minister Micah Kay from First Baptist Church of North Brentwood! You do not want to miss it!

SIGN UP TO BE A YOUTH MINISTRY VOLUNTEER

We are so thankful for your presence at First Baptist Church of Vienna. As you know, our church values offering meaningful times of outreach and fellowship. As our church grows and we welcome many youth and children to the ministry, we desire to build a team of faithful volunteers to serve and who will share our vision, heart and values. If you are interested in becoming a youth ministry volunteer, please contact me at kjones@fbcv.org. It's exciting to see people begin to grow in their faith as they reach out to be a blessing to others! I look forward to hearing from you!

THE CALL OUT

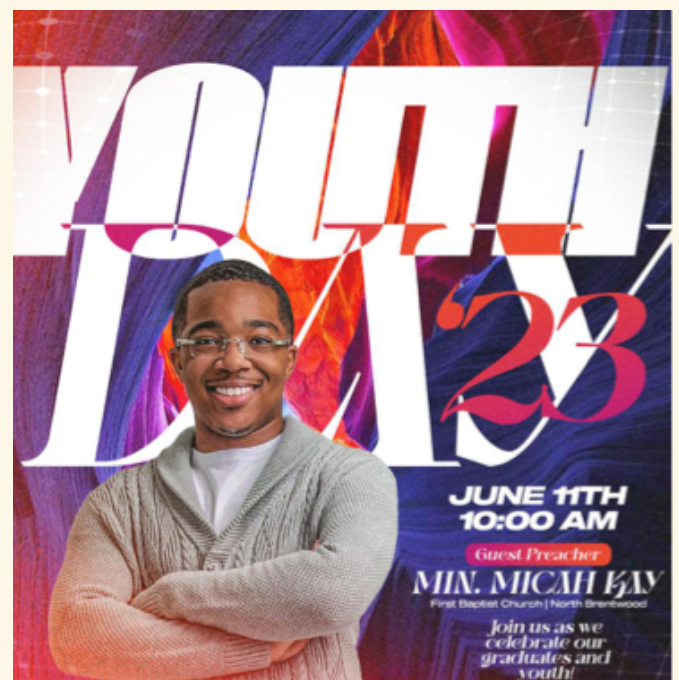
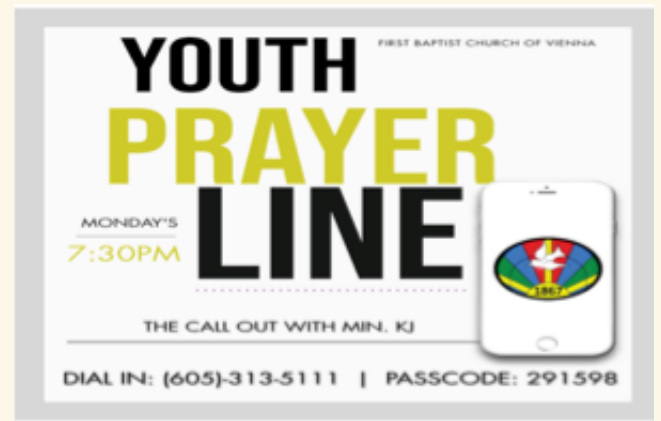
The Call Out Prayer Call begins at 7:30pm. Be sure to have your prayer journal during our devotional time. This is going to allow us to journey together during our prayer call. If you do not have a prayer journal, you can still join the prayer call!

SUMMER CAMP

The camp offers students the chance to study singing, dancing and acting while rehearsing for a theatrical production. Students will also enjoy theater games, arts & crafts, and much more.

We are in need of summer camp counselors! If you have a passion working with students and the arts, or know someone who is interested in being a summer camp counselor. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me via email at kjones@fbcv.org.

Be sure to register now at www.tinyurl.com/fbcvcamp2023





ALTAR FLOWERS

Dee Dee Carter and family
to commemorate the 117th
birthday of their grandfather,
Deacon Joseph Carter, and the
105th birthday of their
grandmother, Lucy Coles.

Dee Dee Carter and family in
loving memory of their mother,
Esther “Tippy” Carter.

—Compiled by Ceola Allen

FREEDOM

Each one of us is born most
free
And we alone can choose
To do what God would have
us do,
To use what God would use.

Or we are also free to seek
The proud and selfish way —
A life where other gods
come first
To reign and hold full sway.

But when we follow where
Christ leads,
We find that freedom’s place
Is really in God’s will for us,
And we have chosen GRACE

— Newsletternewsletter.com

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATING COLLEGE SENIORS

May He give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed.
Psalm 20:4

We are so very proud of all of our Graduates!

Dylan Sparks (Davidson College)

B.S. Computer Science with a Hispanic Studies Minor

What’s Next?

Dylan will be Commissioning as a 2nd Lt. in the US Army
to be an Active Duty Signal Officer

Dezire Duverglas (George Washington University)

B.S. Integrative Studies with a concentration in Social Justice
and Human Rights

What’s Next?

Studying and preparing for Campus Ministry

Amaya Thomas (George Mason University)

B.S. Graphic Design & Dance

Jaelin Mitchell (George Mason University)

B.A. Chorale Music Education with an African and African American
Studies Minor

Dunni Oni (George Mason University)

B.A. English

Hana Lee (Boston University School of Medicine)

Masters, Medical Sciences

What’s Next?

Hana will be applying to and attending Medical School

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST COLLEGE CONNECTION SCHOLARS

Damierah Walker (Falls Church High School)

She received offers from, Norfolk State University, Virginia State University, Virginia Union, and NOVA. She has accepted Virginia State University. She is the Captain of the Varsity Track Team at Falls Church, MVP several times; She also attends the Academy of Animal Science within Fairfax County Schools. Her plan is to become a Veterinarian. She will start out in Biology, and then go to a school that has a Vet program.

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS TO OUR COLLEGE SCHOLARS

Eric Morgan

Ronald Ayers

Jaelin Mitchell

Justing Purvis

May God continue to bless you and guide you as you celebrate another
year of life.

—Submitted by Jennifer Spriggs



Marriage Ministry

Mental health awareness month was celebrated in May. While May is the month set aside each year to recognize the importance of this worldwide health concern, it's something that should be brought to light every month.

When in a partnership, the mental health of both individuals becomes a shared concern. A married person has a dual responsibility of taking care of their mental health while also being mindful and aware of their spouse's mental health. One way to be mindful is to simply provide support to one another on everyday tasks. Support offers relief, rest, and a feeling that you're not all alone.

An example of some tasks a couple can offer support to one another are cleaning, shopping, helping out with daily chores around the house, supporting elderly parents or extended family, attending school events or taking care of an ill or sick child. Partners can also ask each other directly what type of support they need.

This month, we challenge our married couples to look for new ways to offer each other support. Next time we see each other, let's share ideas.

We wish a very happy and blessed anniversary to:

Michael and Cheryl Calhoun
May 16th

Damian and Jacqueline Wilborn
June 2nd

— Natalie M. Ruffin

Police Reform Recommendations

Pastor Vernon C. Walton recently served on a community task force asked to review Fairfax County police department policies a suggest improvements. The task force recently issued a report and NBC4 interviewed Dr. Walton as part of the coverage. Here is an edited version of that article by Julie Carey, News4 Northern Virginia Bureau Chief. Published May 18, 2023.



After a string of police shootings in Fairfax County, a community task force was assigned to review the police department and present some suggested improvements.

Now, that new set of reform recommendations is under review by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, and headed to the office of Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis before he shares his take with the Board.

The recent deadly police shooting of a suspected shoplifter, Timothy Johnson, brought attention back to police practices, as the working group began its examinations amid an uptick in police shootings in the county.

"Timothy Johnson's unfortunate death highlights and reminds us of the urgency of this conversation," said Pastor Vernon Walton, a member of the working group that put together the suggestions.

The group began with 300 suggestions from the community, then distilled them into a report just presented to the Board of Supervisors public safety committee.

"This report in no way indicates a lack of confidence in our Fairfax County police," Walton said during a meeting on Tuesday. "What we do note is there are some things that need to be addressed."

One of the biggest recommendations from the group is that anytime an officer points a gun at a civilian or suspect, the action be reported to the community as a use of force.

"We feel that when an officer points at gun at an individual, that's an actual use of force and should be recorded and reported to the community as a use of force," said Phil Niedzielski-Eichner, another member of the working group.

A police spokesman told News4's Julie Carey that the department is already collecting data on any use of a firearm.

Also as a result of the deadly shooting that killed Johnson, Davis announced his department was starting work to create a foot pursuit policy. The working group has asked that the policy be fast tracked with a report to the community within 45 days.

Other specific police shootings have played a part in the working group's recommendations: Aaron Lynch was killed in 2022 when he came at police with a wooden mask and bottle while suffering a mental health crisis.

The working group wants to see cases like that increasingly handled by clinicians and social work teams—not police officers.

They also suggested that the Board of Supervisors give the police civilian review panel more authority. That would be allowed under recent legislation in Virginia.

"The information they review is given to them by the police," said Walton. "They are not allowed to subpoena or question witnesses. They can only read accounts that are provided for them. This is why we are advocating for an expansion of that authority."

Money Matters: When Should I Collect Social Security? Three Green Lights to Look For

When is the right time to claim Social Security? This is a tricky question to answer because the right moment is different for people depending on their own unique situation.

If you're on the fence about whether starting benefits right now makes sense or not, watch for these three green lights that could suggest now is the right time for you to claim.

1. You have other income sources

One green light that suggests you can claim Social Security is if you have other income to live on besides your benefits. Your Social Security checks are only going to replace about 40% of the income you were earning before retirement. That's not nearly enough to cover all your needs as a senior, especially as healthcare costs often rise as you age.

2. You have 35 years of work under your belt

Your Social Security benefit is based on average wages in your highest-earning 35 years (after adjusting for wage growth). If you haven't worked that long, then your average wages would be reduced by the inclusion of years of \$0 wages in the calculation.

You don't want to reduce your benefit by not working for enough years. In fact, you'll ideally want to make sure your average wages are as high as possible. So, if you are earning more than you did in the past and want to work an extra year or two to push some lower-earning years out of your benefits calculation, that could be worth doing. If you're satisfied you've got 35 good-earning years under your belt, though, that's a green light that you're ready to claim benefits.

3. You've coordinated with your spouse

A decision of when to claim Social Security impacts both you and your spouse if you're married.

If you were the higher earner, you may want to wait as long as possible to claim benefits as doing so would allow your spouse more income if you pass away first. That's because Social Security survivor benefits allow your spouse to keep your benefit when you die if it's higher than their own retirement check.

If your spouse is waiting on you to claim spousal benefits, though, then an earlier claim might be called for. Spousal benefits can equal up to one-half the higher earner's primary benefit at full retirement age, but they don't become available until the person whose work history they're based on has claimed their own retirement checks first.

Ultimately, you want to be sure you're really ready to file, because it can be hard to undo a benefits claim once you've made it. Watching for these three green lights is a good way to tell if that's the case for you.

If you and your spouse have worked out a strategy together to maximize your combined lifetime Social Security income and to make sure whoever lives longer is provided for, this is a green light that suggests moving forward makes sense.

—Submitted by Willie Boykin; based on an article by Christy Bieber in The Motley Fool



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With Pastor Walton

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DR. VERNON C. WALTON



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FIRST BAPTISTCHURCH

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

June

Fruit Bearing Disciples

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28	29	30	31	1	2	3 9:00 am Serving Leaders Meeting 11:00 Tour & Talk
4 Communion Sunday 8:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	5 12:00 pm Prayer Call	6 12:00 pm Prayer Call	7 7:00 am Prayer Call 12:00 pm Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	8 12:00 pm Prayer Call	9 12:00 pm Prayer Call	10 Food Distribution
11 Youth Day & Education Sunday 8:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	12 12:00 pm Prayer Call	13 12:00 pm Prayer Call	14 7:00 am Prayer Call 12:00 pm Prayer Call 7:00 pm Women of the Movement	15 12:00 pm Prayer Call	16 12:00 pm Prayer Call	17 Juneteenth Celebration 11:00am-3:00pm
18 Fathers Day 8:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	19 Summer Camp Week 1 12:00 pm Prayer Call	20 12:00 pm Prayer Call	21 7:00 am Prayer Call 12:00 pm Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	22 12:00 pm Prayer Call	23 12:00 pm Prayer Call	24
25 8:00 am CLA 10:00 am Worship	26 Summer Camp Week 2 12:00 pm Prayer Call	27 12:00 pm Prayer Call	28 7:00 am Prayer Call 12:00 pm Prayer Call 7:00 pm Mid-Week Worship	29 12:00 pm Prayer Call	30 12:00 pm Prayer Call	1

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. - John 15:5