

MARCH 2022

The Epistle

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



From
**Pastor
Walton's
Desk**

Grace and peace from God our Father!

This month marks the beginning of our journey toward the cross of Calvary. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Lenten season. For us, this period represents a time of reflection, repentance, and spiritual growth. These 40 days symbolize the 40 days and nights that Jesus spent in the wilderness prior to beginning his personal ministry. As we look to Calvary, it is my hope and prayer that we would spend considerable time in prayer and meditation. Therefore, I want to impress upon you the importance of following the Lenten guide. In the guide, you will find weekly devotionals, daily scriptures, and information regarding what we are abstaining from, as well as the devotional habits we are looking to implement or increase.

In addition to the start of Lent, March is also Women's History Month. I am delighted to honor the women who have contributed to our society and to our heritage and history here at First Baptist. Sunday, March 13, we will celebrate Women's Day. Our guest speaker will be Bishop Lisa M. Weah of New Bethlehem Baptist Church

Pastor, continued on page 2





Margaret Chichester
for the lost of her aunt,
Alice Cordelia Miller

Deaconess Helen Bowers
and family for the loss of
Deacon Frank Bowers

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Pastor, *continued from page 1*

of Baltimore, MD along with musical guest Ronnette Harrison Rollins from radio station Praise 104. I hope you will register to join us in-person for this wonderful and exciting occasion. The Women's Ministry will also host "Women in the Word". This will be a series of Zoom discussions led by three dynamic women of God where they will engage in dialog surrounding wholeness, wellness, and healing. This series will begin Monday March 28, at 7 p.m. with Rev. Jewel London. The following weeks will be led by Rev. Cokiesha Bailey-Robinson and Dr. Elaine Sanders. Please invite the women in your life to be apart of these real and relevant conversations.

Finally, we will continue our Justice and Legislative conversations on Tuesdays this month. Although Black History is over, we are always in the pursuit of justice. I will be sitting down with Fairfax County Supervisors Rodney Lusk and Walter Alcorn, along with Commonwealth Attorney Steve Descano. We will discuss the issues in the county that affect us most. I am excited about this month and I look forward to sharing and engaging with you.

FBCV Partners with A Natural Ruby, LLC

"Let's raise children who won't have to recover from their childhoods." Pam Leo

The Rape, Abuse, Incest National Network (RAINN) reports that "Every 68 Seconds, an American is Sexually Assaulted. And every nine minutes, that victim is a child. Sexual violence affects hundreds of thousands of Americans each year."

In a partnership effort, First Baptist Church of Vienna and A Natural Ruby, LLC are hosting a donation drive for the entire month of April to give respect for the national awareness of Sexual Assault. We are asking for donations of only new and packaged underwear, undershirts, socks, pajamas, and, if possible, packaged sweatpants and shirts for girls, boys, women, and men. Please note donation drive items can have simple patterns for youth, but no designer or logo items.

Sexual Assault is an endemic that affects every person; it knows no age, race, socioeconomic, or religion. When a person is sexually assaulted their bodies and clothing become evidence. The purpose of this donation drive is to collect new, packaged undergarments and clothing to provide to treatment centers in D.C., Maryland, and Northern Virginia area.

Our collaborative effort for this donation drive acknowledges that this faithful community recognizes Sexual Assault. We pay respect through our expression to do what we can until the survivor seeks our spiritual guidance.



Complete Serenity

Many of us have heard the first part of what's called "The Serenity Prayer," attributed to theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. But we would do well to learn the rest of it as well:

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference, living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; taking this world as it is and not as I would have it; trusting that you will make all things right if I surrender to your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen." *Newsletternewsletter.com.*"

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Coming for Easter...



A Prayer for Lent



This year, Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, fell on March 2. During worship services that day, pastors in many Christian churches dip a finger in ashes (often made by burning branches from the previous Palm Sunday) and make a cross on parishioners' foreheads.

Why ashes? Traditionally, they're a sign of mourning, humiliation and penitence. Ashes also represent the frailty and temporary nature of human life ("You are dust, and to dust you shall return," Genesis 3:19). Christians are pained because our sins led to Jesus' death. With repentant hearts, we begin the season of Lent, knowing that it leads to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday.

For Ash Wednesday—and throughout the 40 days of Lent—ponder this prayer from an Italian sacramentary, or liturgical book: "O God, you know how fragile is our human nature, wounded as it is by sin. Help your people to enter upon the Lenten journey strengthened by the power of your word, so that we may be victorious over the seduction of the Evil One and reach the paschal feast in the joy of the Holy Spirit."

—*Newsletternewsletter.com*

THE DISCIPLES CORNER:

Growing in His Grace and Knowledge: A Word from Our Own

Learning never ceases as believers! And, in these pandemic times it is important to rely on God for direction and understanding. Since 2021 we have been embarking on a self-reflection journey as a church and as individuals through the study of God's word. A closer look at Spiritual Gifts is allowing us to see the #ShiftingInOur-Gifting, and to readily identify how God desires to use us for His glory. The scripture records in Philippians 1:6 'being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.' These words allow us to feel a sense of comfort and grace that until the Lord says it's over, it's not over! There is work yet still to do, and the Great Recruiter is calling your name. We are rounding out our last Spiritual Gifts Connection Groups in March and are excited to hear how these classes are impacting our membership. I recently had a chance to learn from two our members what they are gleaning.

Q: Why take another gift inventory?

A: I think that it is was important to take a new Spiritual Gifts inventory to learn more about your strengths. We have experienced a paradigm shift over the past couple of years. As we learn more about our new selves, as well as any new interests that have emerged, we can learn to stretch ourselves even more. Also, it has been a while since the last inventory, and we have matured. There may be areas that we may no longer enjoy serving and other areas that pique our interest. I feel like it is important to continue to grow in this new season of worship.

Q: What are you learning about yourself?

A: I have learned so much about myself when I took a Connection Group course that was not one of my top three areas. I learned how others' strengths can help you to develop in areas that you feel uncomfortable doing. Watching and listening to the enthusiasm in a different area is a reminder that if you keep an open mind, you can gradually grow from where you are into other unique ways of bringing others to Christ. I have learned to try new things and allow others to be there to help me in my spiritual growth.

Q: How is Connection Group participation guiding your communication and relationship with God in this season in your life?

A: Participation in the Connection group has kept me reading my bible, studying new information, sharing with others, and re-evaluating my commitment to God's Word. Retaking the inventory and participating in the Connection Group study has revealed that God wants me to serve Him, honor Him and study to show myself approved. God's Word guides me in the right direction in life.

Thank you, **Deaconess Teresa Lane**, for sharing your insight. Now let's hear from another member how the study of

God's word keeps illuminating her life.

Q: Why take another gift inventory?

A: I took another gift survey to get a current assessment of my spiritual gifts since the last inventory taken in 2019. I wanted to see if my responses indicated new signs of gifting during the prior 18-months of COVID which prevented my availability to do in-person music ministry at nursing homes, sing in the church choir, and meet in-person with the Evangelism and the Stephen ministries, which I had previously done.

Q: What are you learning about yourself since taking the inventory?

A: I first learned what my top gifts are: Mercy, Teaching, Shepherding, and Evangelism. I was challenged to see how God could use me to operate in these gifts virtually at home. Although I have not been active musically, I have enjoyed being strengthened and drawn toward other pursuits. Mercy: Intercessory prayer privately and with others by phone, encouraging calls to nursing home residents; Teaching/Shepherding (virtually): Serving as a facilitator for two virtual diverse racial reconciliation small groups; Evangelism: Continuing to serve and grow as Servant Leader of FBCV Evangelism Ministry (monthly conference calls).

Q: How is Connection Group participation guiding your communication with God in this season in your life?

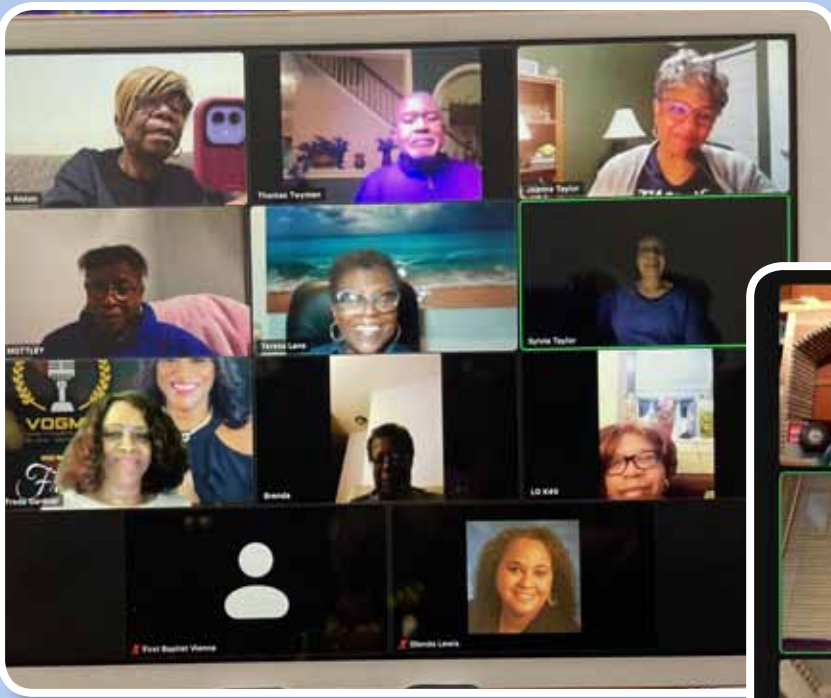
A: I have greater appreciation for being in "community" with others, which has resulted in more in-depth prayers and conversations with God for the needs of my "brothers and sisters." The Connection groups have emphasized that God's gifts to each of us are not for ourselves, but to be used to help others. This focus is causing me to be intentional in seeking God's leading for continued growth in discerning how He wants me to use my gifts.

Sylvia Taylor, we appreciate you allowing us a glimpse into your faith in God and process of listening to God speak to you.

All the persons in our Spiritual Gifts Connections Groups have had a wonderful time connecting, fellowshiping, and learning how God is preparing them to serve in these pandemic times. Thank you to our facilitators Deaconess Teresa Lane, Antoinette Guidry, Cheryl Calhoun, Pastor Vernon Walton, Anita Young, Deacon Willie Boykin, JoAnn Alston, Melinda Warren, Deacon Andre Carpenter, and Deacon Jeff Grant. Stay connected to the church website www.fbcv.org, and to the Epistle to learn of upcoming Connection Groups and small group Bible Study opportunities.

—Dr. Jacquie Hood Martin, Director of Discipleship and Ministry Formation

FBCV CONNECTION GROUPS



Spotlight on Aisha Holloway and Alyssia Ricks

Thank you for how you have contributed to the life of FBCV



Ashia (Shi) Holloway has been singing in church all of her life as her father is pastor in the A.M.E. Zion Church. The pandemic put a hold on their church services, so when Harrison Morrow, our piano player, asked her to sing at our Easter service in 2021 she was eager to do it. According to Holloway, “I was ecstatic to be using my gift again and I’ve been singing with FBCV ever since. And I love it!”

The words of her favorite song, “Lord You are Good” by Todd Galberth, include words we can all live by...“even when it seems like the world around us is falling apart, He has still been better than good to us.”

Her favorite scripture 2 Chronicles 7:14 is equally inspiring: *“If my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked way, then will I hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.”*

Home for Ashia is Buffalo, NY even though she moved around quite a bit and likes to think of the “entire East Coast” has her home.

Her maternal grandmother is Panamanian and she comes from a long line of preachers with at least 10 preachers in her family at the moment.

Aisha earned a bachelor’s degree from Howard University in Afro American Studies in 2015. Her goal is to become a college professor and to one day be a chair of an Afro American Studies department at an HBCU.

Aisha said, “Everyone seems so kind and loving. I wish I was able to hug and meet everyone after each service.”



Alyssia Ricks (Lee Lee or Lee for short) was led to FBCV because of her love of ministering and singing. She comes from a family of singers. Alyssia and her friend, Aisha Holloway, wanted to find a place where they could use their gifts. An invitation by Harrison Morrow, our piano player, presented them with an opportunity to sing with our choir.

When asked about her favorite song, this was her reply: “I love music so I have a lot of favorites but one song that I have on repeat as of now is “Make me Over” by the Walls Group. As we go through everyday life we can get caught up and stray away from the path that God has destined for us. This daily walk with Christ encourages us to be more like Jesus; it’s not our will but God’s will that we want to be done in our life. We must ask God to continually make and mold us so that we can be seated at the right hand of the father.”

Her favorite verse is Jeremiah 29:11 *“For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”* She added: “So why worry when we already have the victory!”

Ricks’ hometown is Sedley, Va. in Southampton County. She’s a 2021 graduate of Howard University with a major in History and a minor in Allied Sciences. Her goal is to return to Southampton County to give insight on the rich history that has been hidden from our community. She wants to help them to delve into the truth.

Alyssia comes from a big family, four boys and one girl. She also comes from a family of preachers. Her grandfather is the pastor of her home church and the first lady is her grandmother. Her father is an elder and the youth pastor while her mother is a minister as well as the musician for the church.

“Aisha and I appreciate the love we receive every Sunday from the FBCV family. We hope to grow in the Lord with you all!”

★ ★ ★ COLLEGE CONNECTION ★ ★ ★

COLLEGE CONNECTION PRAYER CIRCLE

The College Connection Ministry wants to pray with you! During our monthly ministry meeting, College Connection Ministry members regularly lift your needs in prayer. Prayer requests for the month of March should be submitted to Sister Benita Parks (benitaparks@verizon.net) by March 10. Parents are also welcomed to submit prayer requests on their child's behalf. We look forward to hearing from and praying for you.

MARCH 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.

Happy Birthday to our March Scholars:

Dunni Oni, a junior at George Mason University; and

Jonathan Williams, a freshman at North Carolina A&T University.

A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COLLEGE BOUND HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS, CONGRATULATIONS.

Justin Thomas Purvis will graduate from high school in June 2022. He has been accepted by and plans to attend George Mason University where he will study computer science.

Calvin Anthony Harriott will graduate from John Champe HS in June. He has applied to the following schools: George Mason University, North Carolina A&T University, Seton Hall, University, Christopher Newport University, Hampton University, Virginia Tech, and University of Virginia. Calvin, we can't wait to hear what school you choose to attend.

Justin and Calvin, we look forward to welcoming you to College Connection!

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS—COLLEGE CONNECTION WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU.

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):

- Full Name
- Graduation Date (and high school)
- Colleges/Universities you have applied to (or have been accepted to)
- Intended Major (and minor, if applicable)

COLLEGE CONNECTION SCHOLARS: IT'S NOT TOO LATE.

We want to hear from you. Your First Baptist Family would love for you to share with us how your first semester of school has been, any major accomplishments, and other college experiences. Send us your Good News to arnitrad@mac.com

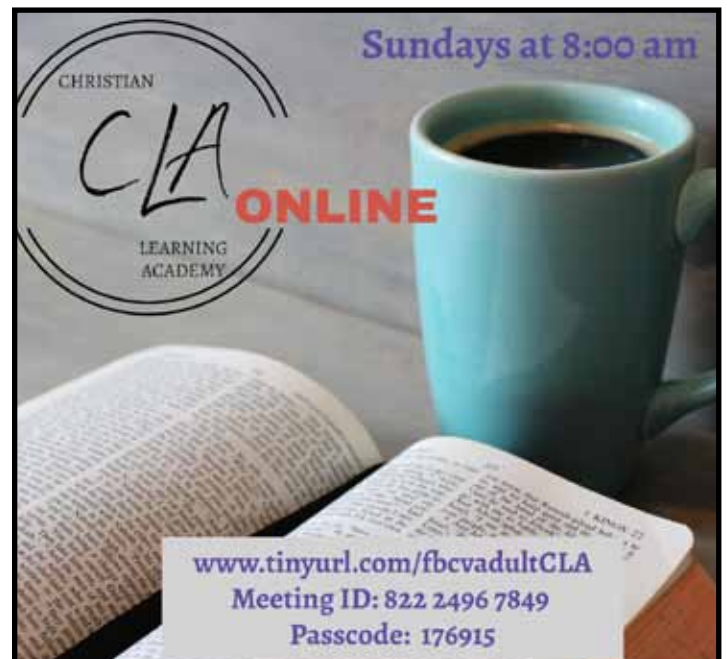
EXTRA EXTRA READ ALL ABOUT IT:

Did you see our very own **Jayden Seay** (freshman at North Carolina A&T) quoted in the February 11th edition of The Washington Post article titled, "Amid nationwide enrollment drops, some HBCU's are growing. So are threats." Jayden shared how he knew he would be attending an HBCU and was quoted as saying the following: "This was the place I needed to be...Going to a school with such a rich history in the fight for civil rights." To read the entire article, visit <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2022/02/11/hbcu-enrollment-growth-bomb-threats/>

THE COLLEGE CONNECTION MINISTRY WELCOMES YOU. JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT MEETING.

The College Connection Ministry meeting for this month is scheduled for March 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.

—Submitted by Jennifer Spriggs



Money Matters: Take a look at what you own and what you owe

You may own a car or a home—or have money in the bank. Add it all up, and it can seem substantial. But to truly know what you own, you have to factor in what you owe.

The combination of what you own (your assets) and what you owe (your liabilities) makes up your personal net worth. Knowing your net worth is important for two reasons:

- It lets you understand your current financial situation.
- It gives you a reference point for measuring progress toward your goals.

Ideally, as you continue to earn and save, your net worth will grow. If your net worth is low or in the red, you'll need to work on saving more and spending less. To watch your progress, calculate your net worth now and recalculate it once or twice a year.

How to set up a personal net worth statement:

Setting up a net worth statement is as easy as creating a simple checklist and doing some basic math.

1. List your assets (what you own), estimate the value of each, and add up the total. Include items such as:

- Money in your bank accounts
- Value of your investment accounts
- Your car
- Market value of your home
- Business interests
- Personal property, such as jewelry, art, and furniture
- Cash value of any insurance policies

2. List your liabilities (what you owe) and add up the outstanding balances. Include items such as:

- Mortgage
- Car loan
- Credit card balance
- Student loans

3. Subtract your liabilities from your assets to determine your personal net worth.

If you need assistance calculating or determining your net worth, please feel free to contract your First Baptist Federal Credit Union

—Submitted by Willie Boykin based on a Schwab MoneyWise article titled “Your Personal Net Worth”



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