

## “What We’ve Learned”

There is a Chinese curse that goes something like this: *May you live in interesting times.*

I can relate, can't you?

It's been a while since we've published a newsletter. Since the pandemic broke upon us like a tidal wave, we've been swamped. I never realized how much work being closed would be.

Except, we haven't been closed. Not really.

Since that first week in mid-March, we've been learning all sorts of new things. I now know more about Zoom than any Baptist preacher ought to have to know.

That's one thing we've all learned for sure: that we can do some of our meetings online, in part or in whole. Attendance at committee meetings, for instance, has been as good or better than it was before. Seems that people like being able to sit in their living rooms and attend a meeting, or be out of town on business and not miss out altogether.

So, continuing with Zoom for meetings, or at least having a way to offer it as an option, is something we'll likely continue to do even after the pandemic has passed.

We've also learned that we can worship together on Zoom, but that it's not the same as being together in person.

In the book of Hebrews, the author writes,

*“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another ...”*

We've certainly found ways to encourage one another, through phone calls and porch visits and the like.

And the Zoom-based services have allowed people who love our church, but live in distant places, to join us for worship. The same goes for those whose health conditions make it unwise for them to venture outside the house.

So, having an online presence, long-term, is something we've learned that we need to have, and we're working to make that experience as rich as we possibly can. It may not be Zoom. It might be some other platform that's got better audio. But, we're online for good.

To that end, we've learned that our camera system is past its prime. Without getting too technical, the cameras are fifteen years old, and, in tech terms, that's a couple of lifetimes ago. The format and resolution they provide simply isn't up to modern standards.

We're looking at an upgrade, and hope to bring a recommendation to you at our business meeting at the end of the month.

July 2020

But, still, even with the best technology available, there's just no substitute for being in the room. So much happens in a physical interaction, whether in a group or in a one-on-one setting, that just doesn't happen over a computer screen.

And, the sanctuary itself is “sticky” with memories and associations of what God has done in our midst.

So, while I'm grateful for the ability to meet virtually, I am anxious for the day when we can all safely gather at church.

And, sing.

I miss our singing together, and I'm pretty sure you do, too. There's something about the people of God, singing His praises together, that can't be replicated.

But, right now, not knowing the extent of the virus' spread in our community, we just can't. We know, based on very solid science, that singing is an effective way to spread coronavirus.

And, unfortunately, right now, we have no way of knowing for sure that everyone attending is negative for COVID, or even a decent way of assessing the probability.

We've also learned that the strength of our church lies in the great variety of people who are part of it.

I always tell folks who are interested in our church that we're an “eclectic” group ... that we have people of every age and income level, every religious history and political leaning.

Our church is a great symphony orchestra, in which each of us is different, but together, we make beautiful harmonies to God's glory.

We've learned that others have different feelings about this pandemic than we do, and how to be considerate of those people, rather than simply pounding on the table and insisting on our own way.

For example, we encourage you to wear a mask at church, strongly. But we're not going to mandate it, and we're not going to judge or shame anyone either way.

I've been humbled by the grace and patience you've shown, as we've worked together to stay connected, and to love one another through these “interesting times”.

I told someone the other day that I'd spent 37 years learning to be a pastor, and was going to end my career as a televangelist!

But, not really. I'm your pastor, and I've never been prouder to be your pastor than in these last few months.

So, God bless you. Pray for one another, and be safe. And, make five phone calls a day!

## MISSIONS

### Summer Mission Offering

School will soon be ramping up, and to help our local students prepare, we are, once again, sponsoring our "stuff a backpack" ministry project.

We're looking for contributions, either monetary or in-kind, in order to provide a variety of school supplies to place in backpacks to be given to children in need..

Here are some helpful items:

Pencils (#2 - yellow)	Glue sticks
3-ring pencil pouch	Liquid glue
Pencil box	Crayons
Hand sanitizer	Scissors
Hand soap	Highlighters
Baby wipes	Sticky notes
Clorox wipes	Scotch tape
Tissues	Ziploc bags
Markers	Colored pencils
Book bags	Sheet protectors
Trapper-keepers	3x5 index cards
Journals	Subject dividers (3-ring)
Dry-erase markers	Cap erasers (for pencils)
Pocket folders	Big pink erasers
Loose-leaf paper	3-ring binders
Composition notebooks	

Bring items to the church, or make contributions designated "Backpack project", by Sunday, August 9<sup>th</sup>.

### Souls Program

On Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, it will be our turn to help feed homeless people in Elizabeth City as part of the Souls Feeding Program. We prepare the food at the church and take it to the Souls building, where we serve it to the people.

During this time we are only allowed to prepare take-out plates and sack dinners for people to pick up. We still need help in preparing the food at the church and putting together the bags. The food needs to be prepared and taken to Elizabeth City by 5:00 p.m.

If you are interested in helping, please contact Sandra Holcombe or Cathy Parker.

## CHURCH SERVICES

### In-Person Services Resume

Governor Cooper has recently moved the state into Phase 2 of his reopening plan, and has exempted churches from limits on gatherings, while continuing to recommend safe practices of hygiene and physical distancing. For this reason, we are limiting attendance in the sanctuary to approximately 45-50 people, and using the fellowship hall for overflow seating.

Wearing a mask is not required, but we do strongly encourage this as an act of kindness and consideration for those around you.

Moreover, based on solid science, we will not be including congregational singing in our in-person worship services. Instead, our praise team will provide the music for the service.

We are aware that many in our congregation and community are not yet ready to participate in an in-person gathering. For this reason, we are continuing to broadcast the service on Zoom. To attend via Zoom, visit our website for meeting information.

The service will begin at 11:00 a.m., and will last 45-60 minutes. We will open the service for viewers by 10:45 a.m., so that you can log on and check your audio and video connections.

Feel free to share this link broadly, by pointing friends to our website, as this service is open to the general public, and we invite anyone to attend.

You may visit our website [www.moyockbaptist.org](http://www.moyockbaptist.org) for an edited version of recent services.

### Sunday School Classes

Sunday School classes however are still on Zoom at this time.

Preschool, Children 1 & 2, Youth and Adult classes are all available.

## YOUTH

### Youth Movie Night

The next outdoor youth movie night will take place on Friday, July 10<sup>th</sup>. Arrival time is 7:30 p.m., and the movie will begin at 8:00 p.m.

Please eat supper before you come. We'll have popcorn and drinks, but not a full meal.

## CHILDREN

### Vacation Bible School

We have held a meeting of people interested in Vacation Bible School and other ministries with preschoolers and children. We determined that, at this time, we do not foresee conducting a traditional week-long VBS for this summer.

We did, however, discuss the possibility of providing some stand-alone Bible study events for our elementary-age children, along the line of our youth fellowship. These would be activities taking place outside, for children in grades 1-5, on dates and times to be determined.

We also discussed, favorably, the idea of adding a "Children's church" component to our Sunday evening "Lawn chair" church services in order to provide a program for preschoolers. This might involve a Bible study or craft activity, some playground time, or perhaps a performance from our puppet team.

Central to either of these initiatives is finding enough willing volunteers to staff the ministries. If you are willing to help with either the children's ministry or the preschool ministry, please call Lori at the church office and let her know. Once we have a set of willing volunteers, we'll convene a planning meeting and make some more detailed decisions.

## SUNDAY EVENING

### "Lawn Chair" Church

We'll have our next "Lawn Chair" Church service on Sunday evening, July 12<sup>th</sup>.

We've also moved the start time of the service back to 7:00 p.m. in order to provide a little more time in the afternoon for set up and to help with the heat during the service itself.

### Music for Missions

On Sunday evening, July 26<sup>th</sup>, we'll have our next "Music for Missions" outdoors, on the church grounds, starting at 7:00 p.m.

If you'd like to sing, call Sandra Holcombe or Karen Barton for further information.

## CALENDAR

### July

5 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 a.m.	Worship (In Person & Zoom)
7 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 p.m.	Nominating Committee (Zoom)
9 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 p.m.	Preschool Committee (Zoom)
10 <sup>th</sup>	6:30 p.m.	Youth Movie Night (Outside)
12 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 a.m.	Worship (In Person & Zoom)
	7:00 p.m.	Lawn Chair Church (Christian Home)
13 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 p.m.	Stewardship Committee (Zoom)
16 <sup>th</sup>	8:00 a.m.	Ramp Project (16, 17 & 18 <sup>th</sup> )
19 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 a.m.	Worship (In Person & Zoom)
21 <sup>st</sup>	7:00 p.m.	Nominating Committee
24 <sup>th</sup>	4:00 p.m.	Souls Program
26 <sup>th</sup>	11:00 a.m.	Worship (In Person & Zoom)
	7:00 p.m.	Music for Missions (Outside)
27 <sup>th</sup>	7:00 p.m.	Church Conference (Zoom)

## MORE NEWS

### Women's Bible Study

Lisa Rose is currently holding a Bible Study at her home entitled, "Jesus and Women" by Kristi Mclellan. The group meets on Tuesday nights at 6:30 p.m. On the back deck at Lisa's home.

### Adult Bible Study

The pastor is still holding an adult Bible study each Wednesday evening at 8:00 p.m. on Zoom. The study is based on the popular "I Am Second" "white chair" testimonies.

### Church Business Meeting

Our quarterly Church business meeting will be held on Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> on Zoom.

At the conference, we will elect deacons and hear from our Nominating Committee on the elections for the upcoming year. We'll also hear from our Stewardship Committee about our finances, and from our Preschool Committee about plans to open the preschool in the fall.

### Ramp Building Project

The Baptist Men are mobilizing for a ramp building project on Thursday-Saturday, July 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup>, for Ellen Walker, sister of Bryant Lowe and Ramona Humphries.

If you'd like to help, contact the pastor.

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Have an interesting  
quarantine Picture?  
Send to  
pictures@moyockbaptist.org!