



REOPENING THE CHURCH

I couldn't help but note the irony of one of our hymns on the last Sunday of August, "We Gather Together," when we can't gather together. We miss our church family. We miss being together. We long for the day when we can gather in the Sanctuary once again for Sunday worship.

But when can we safely "Gather Together?" Our deacons had the annual deacons retreat via Zoom on Saturday, August 29th. This retreat included all current deacons and our new deacons who begin their service this month. We discussed the reopening of the church. The consensus was that we should not reopen for in-person worship until the state moves to Phase 3. When this happens, our deacons will meet to set a timetable for reopening based on current metrics, trends, and the recommendation of the Davidson County Health Department.

Reopening will not be as easy as simply opening the doors. The deacons will also consider recommendations on cleaning the sanctuary and establish a protocol for worshipers to follow. Church will be a lot different than it was when we last met in early March. Temperature checks, masks and social distancing will be required. We cannot have a choir or congregational singing. There will be limited access to the sanctuary.

It will likely be some time next year before we will feel safe returning to the type of worship service that we all know and love. But when we do open the doors of the church, you will have the option of being in the Sanctuary and hearing Beverly play our magnificent pipe organ. You will be able to hear the music, and I will not have to look at empty pews! Our YouTube broadcasts will continue permanently. Returning to worship in person will be a personal choice. We know that many will not feel comfortable returning for some time.

We realize there are other churches that are already open. We also know that there have been COVID cases that have resulted from people attending worship in some of these churches, even with masks and social distancing. Please know that my primary concern is protecting the health of our church family. Your deacons and church leadership feel the same way.

Our deacons would love to hear from you concerning reopening. The Nominating Committee report will be mailed. It includes all 27 deacons. Please let a deacon know your thoughts. You can also email the church at fbclexington@fbclex.org or call the Information Line and leave a message.

OUR TECHNICAL TEAM IS AMAZING!

When the COVID Crisis hit us in March, Jim Skotthy quickly assembled a group to discuss a YouTube Channel for our church to enable us to broadcast our worship service. Within a few weeks, cameras, cables, sound, and video cards had been ordered and installed, and our crew was trained. On Easter Sunday, we went live on YouTube with our very first YouTube broadcast. Our weekly broadcast on YouTube and WLXN radio has been a special blessing for us and our community during this Pandemic. We are reaching many more people than we were before. We have had almost 1,200 "views" of our Easter Service and almost 600 "views" of the service on August 9th. These "views" may be 2 or more people and this does not include those who listen to the service on the radio.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to our technical crew. Trey Shoaf, Richard Honeycutt, Jim Honeycutt, Whitney Brooks, Wes Richardson, Willie Edwards, Jim Skotthy, Tobin Shepherd, and Hal McGee are a great team. Hours and hours of preparation go into the technical aspect of the service each Sunday. And we are so thankful for Beverly Khemlani who is present in the Sanctuary each Sunday playing beautiful music to bless our service. These people have been our heroes during this crisis.

Steeple Talk

Faith Fellowship Mission

ANNUAL CHURCH MEETING

Our church is legally incorporated in the State of North Carolina. As a legal corporation, we are required to have an Annual Meeting. The COVID Crisis has made this difficult, but we have a plan! The only item that requires congregational approval is our Nominating Committee report that will be mailed to our membership. Please let us know if you do not receive one. The majority of the Annual Meeting is information.

Later this month we will post a video on our church website www.fbclex.org with the informational part of the meeting. This will include financial updates, church events, mission projects, and the latest on reopening. You will have the opportunity to watch this video at your convenience.

We will have a designated time later in the month for you to vote online to approve the Nominating Committee Report. Since the Nominating Committee was unable to meet due to the virus, the report is essentially last year's report with a few exceptions. For those who are not able to vote online, we will have a time for you to leave your vote for approval on the Information Line.

If there are questions you may have please email them to the church at fbclexington@fbclex.org or leave your question on the Information Line.

OUTDOOR PRAYER SERVICE SEPTEMBER 23RD

You are invited to an outdoor Prayer Service on Wednesday evening, September 23rd, at 6:30 p.m. We will gather in the back parking lot of the church, next to the playground. Please bring a lawn chair, wear a mask, and social distance. It will be a simple service, but will give us an opportunity to gather in person.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

On April 1st, Ray Howell celebrated 30 years with us as our Senior Minister!! Also on April 1st, Ronnie Smith celebrated his 15th year with us as weekend security. On June 18th, Sherri Salinas celebrated 8 years as our Financial and Administrative Assistant and on June 26th, Jim Skotthy celebrated his 3rd year as the Business Administrator. We are grateful and thankful for the service these four have given and continue to give to our church!

FALL BIBLE STUDY SEPTEMBER 28TH

Yes, we will have a Fall Bible Study! We can't meet in person but we are going to try a Zoom study. We will send you a link through FBC Friends. We will study the book of Esther, one of the most fascinating books in the Bible. God is never mentioned in Esther, but his presence is seen in a powerful way. I hope you will plan to join us for the first session on Monday night, September 28th, at 7 p.m.

MARTHA BEST CHILDREN'S CENTER

The MBCC was forced to close in late March due to declining enrollment due to COVID-19 and stayed closed until the beginning of June. Thanks to the vote of our members, we were able to keep our staff on payroll while they continued a modified online learning curriculum. On June 1st, the MBCC re-opened and the enrollment has been steady and growing. They even initiated the MBCC "Academy" which is a temporary learning center of K-5 students. Volunteers and trained staff have been assisting the children with getting online to conduct their studies from the various school districts. We are grateful to Laura Adams and her staff for their dedication and to our volunteers for assisting the children!

COVID SAFETY

Since the church closing, some precautions have been taken. Ultra Violet lights have been installed in the Sanctuary, first floor and children's center. They are located in our HVAC system and help to eliminate any potential viruses that may be in the air or entering from the outside. We have checked the fresh air intake to ensure proper circulation is happening and our system re-circulates fresh air every 10 minutes, well within the guidelines suggested by the Health Department. Additional UV lights will be installed in the rest of our system and floors as they become available. In anticipation of opening, hand sanitizing stand alone stations have been ordered and will be placed in strategic positions within the church. Additional measures will be taken in the coming weeks to keep the building and our congregation safe.

BUILDING UPDATES

New acoustical soundproofing tile has been installed on the balcony facing and upper wall of the sanctuary. This is to help with the sound within the sanctuary and increase the enjoyment of all. This was included in the current budget and with your continued giving; we were able to complete this project. Additional work has been done on some plaster and hairline cracks in the walls and ceiling. This work was done due to the generosity of a couple of benefactors. We will continue with scheduled projects as necessary and prudent.

The dishwasher in the kitchen was repaired due to a leak in the soap system, and one of the stand up freezers was serviced and is now functioning properly.

A late May storm downed a tree in the playground and it crashed through a portion of the fencing. That tree was removed and the fencing repaired.

A fire inspection was conducted and with the exception to a minor repair made to the emergency elephant door in the "attic", we passed with flying colors.

Our fire alarm system was inspected and some repairs made to a faulty duct detector, and all is now in proper working order!

We have made an upgrade in our IT provider, and it has provided immediate results. We hope that our connectivity will be more reliable as we move forward.

Our building and grounds crew worked to take up some old boards in the children's playground that we discovered were covering up a storm water drain opening. The metal cover under the wood was rusted and deteriorating. A new cement cover has been ordered to cover up the hole and mulch has been donated from the Fairgrounds, thanks to Vinnon Williams. This project should be complete within days.

NC BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOMES "FOOD

During the month of September, we as a church have a wonderful opportunity to provide food and household products desperately needed for children in care on one of the campuses of the Baptist Children's Homes. The house parents of the cottages serving children and teens, taken from their homes because of severe neglect or abuse, are cooking, cleaning, nurturing and sharing the love of Jesus on our behalf.

Family Matters Sunday School Class members are available every Tuesday in September from 4:30-5:30 for curbside drop off beside the Fellowship Hall entrance to collect much needed food and household products for these precious children. Ray has included in his e-mails a sample list of needed items. Just remember, cottages use everything you and I need to run our homes. If Tuesday curbside doesn't work for you, please call me at (336-239-1846) to arrange a convenient time that we can pick up items from your home.

If you prefer not to shop, BCH can use your monetary donation written to our church to buy food. We will also gratefully accept gift cards to Walmart, Food Lion, etc. so houseparents can shop. We have a wonderful opportunity during this crisis to feed God's precious children. Please help us make this mission project fruitful and successful. Let's "Feed the Kids" in Jesus name.

BUDGET UPDATE

As of July

Budget Received: \$ 54,244.73

Expenses: \$ 39,468.92

Surplus: \$ 14,775.81

Year to Date

2020 Projected Budget: \$ 699,873.00

Budget Received: \$ 395,036.38

Expenses: \$ 319,707.38

Surplus: \$ 75,329.00

These numbers reflect the budget as it stood at the end of July. Some of the year to date surplus is due to the fact that we had the Payroll Protection Plan loan, but much of it is due to the faithfulness of our church. We continue to see positive flow into our church coffers and we have been able to make payments to our local and state missions as well as maintain our ongoing obligations. Those payments to the missions will continue as we monitor our budget during this COVID crisis. We are grateful to you all for continuing to remember the church!

MEMORIALS

General Fund: *Patricia Marlowe* by Miriam Conner, Suzy Conner and Bob & Ann Cole; *Howard Mae Hinson & Ed Ward* by Robert & Ramona Phelps; *Jean de Luca* by Charles & Robyn Whiteman; *Dolly Howell & Roger Rodd & Lori Gilliam* by Fred & Lynda Belk; *Howard Mae Hinson, Patricia Marlow, Jean de Luca, Nelson McMahan, Roger Rodd, Gwen Dail, Charlotte Fulp, Dolly Howell, Doris Butchart, Lori Gilliam, Myra Thacker & James Helvey* by Bob & Ann Cole; *Roger Rodd, Charlotte Fulp, Dolly Howell Gwen Dail, Doris Butchart, Myra Thacker & Lori Gilliam* by Peggy Barnhardt; *Lori Gilliam, Myra Thacker* by Jerry & Patricia Laws; *Lori Gilliam & Myra Thacker* by Ann & Lee Davis; *James Helvey, Howard Mae Hinson & Mahepah Jones* by Sally Davis; *Betty Wright, Ed Ward, Howard Mae Hinson, Jean deLuca, Patricia Smith Marlow, Martha Hipp Daniel, Margaret Brown, Nelson McMahan, Roger Rodd, Gwen Dail, Dolly Howell, Lori Gilliam, Doris Butchart, James Helvey, Bruce Yarborough, Charlotte Fulp, Myra Thacker, Edith Honeycutt* by Anonymous Donor

Building & Grounds: *Tommy Barnhardt, James Helvey, Doris Butchart, Lori Gilliam, Myra Thacker & Bruce Yarbrough* by Hal & Donna Routh

Endowment Fund: *Dolly Howell, Carroll Wall Jr., Betsy Wall Medford, Richard Leon Dunn, Birdi Barrett Dunn & Lori Gilliam* by David & Julia Dunn

MBCC Scholarship Fund: *Ed Ward & Howard Mae Hinson* by Gerald Smith

Memorial Fund: *James Helvey and Hollie Hinson* by Martha & Robert Adams

IT Technology: *Lori Gilliam and Myra Thacker* by Marylyn Hilton

Youth Designated: *Lori Gilliam and Myra Thacker* by Dave Thornhill & Family and Becky Kirkendall

Global Missions: *Eddie Sheets* by Peggy Barnhardt

The Unity Statue at the Square: *Lori Gilliam and Dolly Howell* by Bill Keesler

Radio Ministry: *Lori Gilliam* by Fred McIntyre, Jr.

Music Ministry: *Jim Barton* by Mary Bush; *Lori Gilliam* by Mary Lou Legette, Kenneth & Susan Gardner, Martha & Robert Adams, Breanda & John Garner, Carol Jean Stutts-Wall, Tom & Janet Smith, Hubert & Cateen Olive, Becky Kirkendall, Ann & Ron Stoop, Patricia Joyce, Anne Stone Bullock, Bruce & Ginger Hill, Paul Street, Diane Hedrick, Hilda Forrest, Edward & Barbara Perrell, Glenda & Charles Everhart, Ashley & Gay Whitfield, Frank & Nancy Cagle, Maryann Fathing, Ed & Carlisa Bryant, Team Coed SS Class, Ralph & Jean Ashley, Frank & Patricia Mills, Suzy Conner, Miriam Conner, Dave Colescott, Carol & Avon Mize, Jacqueline Inman, John & Dorothy Rea, Sr., Virginia Flippin, Legrande & Dolly Skinner, Robert & Ramona Phelps, Nancy & Wyatt Helsabeck, Don & Ann Bishop, George & Amy Chambless, Sally Davis, First Wesleyan Church of Bessemer City, Nevin & Suzanne Rohrbaugh, Eddie & Jimmietta Allred and Chip & Kelly Stabler; *Myra Thacker* by Virginia Flippin, Robert & Ramona Phelps and FBC Choir; *Dolly Howell* by Robert & Ramona Phelps

Media Center: *Lori Gilliam* by Mary Lou Legette, Kenneth & Susan Gardner, Martha & Robert Adams, Brenda & John Garner, Carol Jean Stutts-Wall, Tom & Janet Smith, Hubert & Cateen Olive, Becky Kirkendall, Ann & Ron Stoop, Patricia Joyce, Anne Stone Bullock, Paul Street, Diane Hedrick, Hilda Forrest, Edward & Barbara Perrell, Ashley & Gay Whitfield, Frank & Nancy Cagle, Ed & Carlisa Bryant, Team Coed SS Class, Ralph & Jean Ashley, Frank & Patricia Mills, Suzy Conner, Miriam Conner, Dave Colescott, Carol & Avon Mize, John & Dorothy Rea, Sr., Virginia Flippin, Legrande & Dolly Skinner, Sally Davis, First Wesleyan Church of Bessemer City, Eddie & Jimmietta Allred, Jacqueline Inman, Judy LeCroy and Larlie Mae Knight

MEMORIALS

Children's Ministry Fund: *Myra Thacker* by Martha & Robert Adams, Becky Kirkendall, Suzy Conner, Miriam Conner, Dave Colescott, Jacqueline Inman, LeGrande & Dolly Skinner, Judy LeCroy, George & Amy Chambless, Sally Davis and Nevin & Suzanne Rohrbaugh

Chrismon Fund: *Dolly Howell* by Dale & Kelly Lambeth, Ashley & Gay Whitfield, Marylyn Hilton, Hubert & Cateen Olive, Martha & Robert Adams, Becky Kirkendall and Judy LeCroy.

HONORAIUMS

General Fund: *Martha Adams Birthday* by Elizabeth, Steve, Jeff and Kyle Erickson, Judy, David and Kelly Adams; ***Beverly Khemlani and Wes Richardson*** by Peggy Barnhardt; ***Theodosia "The" Jackson's Birthday*** by Betty Sink

FBC Streaming: *Ray Howell, Jim Skotthy, Willie Edwards and Trey Shoaf* by Lane Gilliam, Brannon Gilliam, Whitney Brooks, Kerry Shae & Chris Penland

Building & Grounds: *Ray & Joyce Howell 30 years of Service, Hailey Routh and Parker & Joanne McLendon* by Hal & Donna Routh

Music Fund: *Beverly Khemlani & Wes Richardson* by Becky Kirkendall

Chrismon Fund: *Ray & Joyce Howell* by Becky Kirkendall

CONTACT US!

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday 8:30 a.m to 5 p.m. Friday 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone: 336-245-1261 Website: fbclex.org Email: fbclexington@fbclex.org

Ray Howell – Senior Minister - ray@fbclex.org, (336) 239-4828 or (336) 245-1261 Ext. 104

Jim Skotthy – Business Administrator – jskotthy@fbclex.org, (336) 250-0302 or (336) 245-1261 Ext. 101

Wes Richardson - Minister of Music - wes@fbclex.org, (336) 970-3983 or (336) 245-1261 Ext. 105

Laura Adams – MBCC Director – laura@fbclex.org, (336) 245-1261 Ext. 108

Sherri Salinas – Financial Assistant – sherri@fbclex.org or fbclexington@fbclex.org, (336) 245-1261 Ext. 103

Joyce Howell (Church Bulletins): joycedhowell47@gmail.com, (336) 245-1261 (Information Deadline is 12 noon Wednesdays)

Beryl Phillips (Newsletter): bhphillips1960@outlook.com, (336) 245-1261
(Information Deadline is the 23rd of each month)



Periodical Postage paid at Lexington, NC
Return Service Requested

Steeple Talk (USPS 763-910)
Published monthly by
First Baptist Church
Post Office Box 436
Lexington, North Carolina 27293