



First Baptist Church
Grove City

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APRIL NEWSLETTER

Pastor's Message



I always seem to be looking for my slippers. I remember exactly where I took them off, but they are never where I last left them. By the couch in the family room, in the laundry room, or in the kitchen—they are not there. Most of the time, they end up in the closet. Imagine that; it's like magic. But again, recently, they were not to be found. I asked "Wonder Woman" where she placed them this time? On the chair in the dining room. There are six chairs. I pulled each chair out from under the table. The slippers were on chair number six. I felt as though I was hunting Easter eggs.

Dr. Jerry Neal
Senior Pastor

Dr. Dave Earley
Lead Pastor

Bryan Corbett
Worship Pastor

Dr. John Foster
Discipleship Pastor

David Berna
Visitation Pastor

Jeff Bane
Outreach Pastor

Joshua Wright
Children's Pastor

Robert Stroup
Business Administrator

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www.firstgc.org

With most churches closed because of "The Virus," many are wondering if we will also cancel Easter? The Easter egg "hunts" may be forfeited, but glory to God, no one can stop Easter. The Pharisees couldn't, the Romans couldn't, and death couldn't. They crucified our Savior, placed Him in the tomb, rolled a huge stone in front of the entrance, placed a seal upon it, and stationed a guard before it. And yet, they still could not stop Easter.

He arose, He arose, yes, He arose, (up from the grave He arose)!

The Coronavirus cannot defeat Easter! Our faith and hope in Christ will sustain us now and forever. I thank God for our medical professionals and scientists, but I am even more thankful for the power of Christ that overcomes the world.

Easter will not be cancelled!! Even if we don't meet in our facility.

Pastor Jerry

Members' Ministry

This is not a time to fear, this is a time to seek the Lord and trust His providence. Now is the time to live out your faith!

We should worry only about the people and things we can't pray about. Worry is simply our failure to trust God. It's been said that worry is the advanced interest you pay on troubles that seldom come due. The word *worry* comes from an old German term that means "to strangle." That's what worry does: it strangles us. Stop letting the worries of life strangle you. God's Word says to pray about everything, and rejoice in Christ. Dwell on Him, then you will have peace.

What are we not willing to trust God with? Before you answer, write down what you're worried about, then ask God to forgive you and take that burden from you, and fill you with His peace and joy.

Walking in freedom in Christ means surrendering everything to Him, daily.

God's word declares this:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your graciousness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:4-7

In Christ,

**Pastor Brian Kinnett,
Members' Minister**

From Our Discipleship Pastor

Sometimes we need to be reminded that the "church" is not a building, but instead it is the Body of Christ. We are blessed in our culture to have resources available to build places of worship where we gather together on Sundays and Wednesdays and to participate in other ministries throughout the week. But what if all the buildings were suddenly gone? Could the Church survive?

The events over the past few weeks have forced us to answer this question...maybe it is the first time many of us have even thought about this question. The church is not a building. The church is the Body of Christ; followers of Jesus who obediently make disciples. The world will never dictate the existence of the Church. Jesus declares His church is invincible (Matthew 16:18). The reality is, buildings will crumble, but Christ's Church will never crumble because it is made up of His people, built by Him, for His glory and His purpose.

So how are we to respond when we cannot gather in a building? We respond just as we should when we gather in

Continued in next column

Discipleship Pastor continued

a building. We continue to fellowship with one another. We continue to minister to one another. We continue to worship God. We continue to tell others about God's plan to save them from their sins. We continue to make disciples. The methods may change out of necessity, but the message remains the same. Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners. This was the message the early church embraced, even as they had to meet in house to house. It must be our message during this time of uncertainty, especially when we are focused on the resurrection of Jesus during the Easter season.

The passage found in 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 is an awesome description of God's plan to reconcile the world to Himself. His plan involves you! You are called to be an ambassador for Christ. Be an ambassador for Christ to your neighbors, pointing them to the Sovereign King and Suffering Savior. Implore them to be reconciled to God, the Sustainer during times of instability. Minister to those who are hurting and sick, remembering all Jesus has done for you. Be outwardly focused during a time when it is easy to retreat from the world.

Our neighbors and the world are looking for answers today. We have "The Answer" and we have the opportunity to reach the nations by reaching our neighbors.

**Pastor John Foster,
Discipleship Pastor**

Trustee Ministry

The Trustees are staying busy. While winter has been more wet than white, plowing and salting here and at the Day Care has been necessary.

But, the seasons are a'changing. Snow-time is almost over. We'll be getting equipment ready for mowing and trimming. A new finish mower for the large tractor will improve the results.

With spring will come soccer and field prep and line painting. Additional help is always appreciated for this big job. Anyone interested can contact Kenny Grundei or Dave Berna.

Bus inspections are coming in April/May and we will be going through them making sure they are still in tip-top shape before the inspections.

Our building is aging gracefully, but has reached a point of needing some loving care. Water heaters have been fixed or repaired, braided water lines are being replaced, drywall has been patched, additional storage created, and electrical and electronic updates have been made.

The Trustees and Baptist Builders have been really busy around the church and the Day Care. Security updates are coming to the church and the children's program to stay current with our changing society.

A big "Thank You" to all those who volunteer in so many ways to make FBC the great place it is!

**Love in Christ,
The FBC Trustees**

Women of FBC

Dear Women of FBC,

You are thought of and prayed for every day! We are thankful for our pastors and leadership that God has blessed us with at FBC. I have talked with many of you who are using this time as an opportunity to re-focus attention on what is most important. What a blessing that you have been intentional in reaching out to others. Being forced to slow down these past few weeks has allowed us to live without distractions that subtly steal time. "Social distancing" has already changed big distractions like social media into a constructive and encouraging outreach to stay connected.

The world doesn't seem to be spinning as fast and I personally like the pace. What have you noticed as things have slowed down? Are you relieved by the social break? Do you long for more of this time in your life? Tasks and responsibilities will overwhelm us, and perhaps a reset is what we need. Women in a family often set the tone in the home. The tone God wants us to set is one of joy, optimism, and a delight in the Lord and in our families. I pray we use this time to re-evaluate our priorities and obligations. Those five or ten minutes in the day that we hoped we had for a devotion, prayer, and a cup of coffee have been made available to us. Jesus has all knowledge and authority over the many crises in the world, but He is also mindful of our cares, worries, and everyday activities. He loves us and longs to spend time with us and be the object of our praise. We praise Him by making Him our first priority. Let's re-focus our attention to the One who is most important.

In the coming days and weeks, our Bible studies and events will return, and we can sit face-to-face in fellowship again. Please stop by the Women's kiosk at your first opportunity and pick up a brochure of Groups and Events. As always, feel free to contact me or any one of our Life Group leaders with questions and, most importantly, pray!

God bless you!

**Ronda Kinnett,
Women's Ministry Director**

Notes of Appreciation

The Kovalchik family would like to thank you for the beautiful flowers, wonderful cards, and above all, your prayers. Andy's father visited FBC about five years ago and he said it best: "Your church is very friendly and kind. I really enjoyed it."

Thanks, church family!

Pastor Andy and Karen Kovalchik

Thompson testimony continued from Page 4

The chaos of dealing with my oldest son's addiction and then the loss of a son to drug overdose turned my life around completely. The day of November 4, 2017, was one full of hurt, pain, and questions, but because I had turned my life and my son's drug addiction over to the hands of God, I found hope.

Faith, Family and Friends are now my priority—my 3F's. Thanks to God, I have found peace and I am a spiritual leader in my family. Because God is my priority, I start my day with prayer, daily devotional readings, and quiet time reading Scripture. We always give thanks to God before every meal and schedule many of our personal things not to interfere with church activities. I still work 60+ hours a week, but I find that I have time to spend with God and look forward to activities within church.

Today, I focus upon the positive and try to find some small yet positive outcome or impact in every situation. I am a "Glass Half Full" person with optimism and always think that good things can and will happen. The presence of God in my life and seeing the glass half full has instilled happiness, hope, and joy, even with the loss of my son.

A special thanks to God my Father; to my mother for her morals, principles of compassion, caring for people, and sacrifices she made; to my wife Ernestina for her incredible positive outlook on life and her love; to my late great-grandparents for establishing the foundation of God and church during my youth years. I would also like to extend my thanks to Dr. Neal and Dr. Earley for their powerful weekly sermons that continue to influence my life.

In addition, please let me offer much appreciation to Pastor Brian Kinnett for reaching out and inviting me to Men's Donuts and Devotions and Pastor Berna for inviting me to the monthly Men's Breakfast. A very special thanks to the Grief Share Facilitators and Program at First Baptist Church, PAL, and the Nar-Anon Family Groups for helping me to understand that I had no control of my son's disease of addiction and death and that it is okay to have peace and joy in my life.

In closing, I would like to share words from a sympathy card that I received from co-workers when I lost my son. In this card was a handwritten note from Isaiah Chapter 41, verses 10 and 13 that deeply touched my heart and had a major impact on my life.

Fear not for I am with you; Be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; It is I who say to you, "Fear Not, I am the one that helps you.

This verse ended with a personal note that said to "Lean on our Heavenly Father during this time. He is faithful and able to carry you through this time. Keep your eyes on Him." Thank you so much for reading and God bless you all!

**God Bless,
Pastor David Berna**

Please follow the **FBC Facebook page** and the **FBC website firstgc.org** for updates on AWANA and other children's ministry activities throughout the period of the Coronavirus shutdown.



Men's Corner

The Men's Fellowship Breakfast scheduled for Saturday, April 4th, has been cancelled. We hope to reconvene in the month of May. Below is the testimony of Mike Thompson from our March breakfast.

Thanks to God's mercy and grace, I can share my testimony with you. It began in 1960 in a small town in North Carolina in the Trading Ford community where I was a member and attended Trading Ford Baptist Church. My great-grandparents played a huge role in my life to ensure that I had the opportunity to attend church. They picked me up at home on Sunday mornings and at other times to attend church activities. I attended Sunday school, Sunday worship service, Sunday night service, and Wednesday mid-week prayer meetings as a youth and early teen.

As role models, my great-grandparents were pivotal in leading me to Christ in my early teens. When they reached a point in their health where they could no longer attend church, I also stopped attending on a regular basis.

During my late youth and teen years, it seemed that the family priorities were bowling, racing, and making ends meet. I attended church with other family members, but mostly on holidays. Although I know that my mother and other family members were believers, church was not a consistent priority. Even on Sundays when we would have family lunch, I don't recall regularly giving thanks to God. As I entered my twenties, I drifted further away from God. I married and had two healthy boys. I attended various churches but just did not seem to connect. Life was good, and I found that my career in maintenance working 6-7 days a week was my focus in order to support my family. Sunday was generally a recovery day as I was often too tired to have time for any church activities.

I soon found myself leading my family in the same direction as when I was growing up. We started AAU Baseball in 2000, a travel program with tournaments. As a result, church was just not in the schedule and, when I had a break, I was just too tired and would decide to rest on Sunday. I honestly believe I attended church on holidays out of guilt.

I am the true definition of a Prodigal Son, as I have been in and out of church over the years and have not consistently been obedient to God. It would take days for me to share all the things I am not proud of.

Life has been full of challenges with many events such as my father's death when I was four, and a separation and divorce after almost 20 years of marriage. This led to deep depression and even hospitalization. I cried out to God in prayer many times for help, and He gave me the strength to survive all of my challenges. After surviving this deep depression, once again, I returned to my normal where God was not the center of my life. Life was busy and, although I have always been a believer, I just was not obedient to God, even during many trying, challenging times. I truly thought I was strong enough as a man and I said I didn't need God's help.

Two situations centered around my oldest son that changed my life and finally made me realize that I was just not big enough or strong enough to handle life without God. They were in battling his disease of addiction that began in 2013 and his drug overdose later in 2017.

Thompson testimony continued on Page 3

My View From The Back Of The Pew

*"Train a child in the way he should go,
and when he is old, he will not turn from it."*
Proverbs 22:6

I decided last Sunday morning (March 15th), that if I headed to Home Depot early enough, I could be home in time to "watch" our church services. In case you are unaware, Home Depot is a popular place on the weekends.

Using the helpful shopping list my husband emailed me, complete with a photo of the exact items needed, I pushed my orange buggy all over that store. Suddenly, my alarm chirped that service was about to begin, so I tuned in. Unfortunately, that was the moment two guys needed to saw a piece of lumber the size of a wall. I figured since I had collected four of the five pictures Rick had listed, I could head to the cashier. The closer I got to the front, the better I could hear the preaching.

As I stood in a long line, I noticed a gentleman behind me was getting a little close to me. Annoyed, I was about to ask him if he had heard about the new social distancing policy. Instead he spoke up first to ask what I was watching. I told him I was watching a live stream of my pastor delivering his sermon and held my phone up so he could see and hear for himself. We watched together in silence for almost five minutes before he spoke again. "That preacher is pretty good. Where do you go to church?" I told him and he said he passed "that place" all the time. As I unloaded my cart at the register, I asked him to visit some Sunday morning. He shrugged and said he just might do that.

I've thought about that encounter all week. What if God kept me "lost" at Home Depot long enough so that someone could hear the Gospel? What if He left us "ninety-nine" watching Facebook, so He could minister to the lost "one" at the hardware store?

Certainly, I had nothing to do with it. God certainly didn't want or need my help, especially not my snarky comments. Of course, it wouldn't be the first time God had accomplished His work in spite of me.

Every single day brings additional news, mostly fearful, including closings and warnings. The soothing balm is knowing that this place is temporary, despite our best attempts with goods from Home Depot.

Someday, we are going to our eternal home. We will worship at His feet with a great multitude of our Family. It will be awesome to see those He has won.

Even by working around someone like me!

**Blessings,
Cindy Matlock**

