

First Family News February/ March 2021



From the Pastor 's Desk

**Volume 9, Issue 1
February/ March 2021**

Our God is faithful and He brought us through 2020 in good condition. With His strength and direction, we have been able to continue to worship together in person and remotely through live streaming our services. The Lord has added to our church family this past year and through the online services He has extended our reach. We give Him all the glory!

As we entered the New Year, we were experiencing political, social and economic uncertainties, however we are looking to the future with hope because our God is able to deliver us through all that lies ahead.

In our Quarterly Church Conference, we heard a very encouraging financial report about how we ended 2020. Through God's grace and your generosity, we ended 2020 \$33,000.00 over budget. Praise the Lord and thank you for every gift you have given to the church. I pray the Lord will continue to bless us in this same way in 2021. During the meeting the church approved replacing the current church sign with a new digital, LED sign and we approved sandblasting, repairing and painting the fire escape on the Fellowship Hall building. We also heard in the course of the meeting about ministries of our church moving forward, looking a little different from the past, but finding ways to move ahead. Thank you to our Children's Minister, Youth Minister, Deacons, Sunday School workers, Evangelism Committee, Pastor Raleigh and our worship teams and everyone else who is working hard to keep us moving forward in these challenging times.

Our construction project is continuing to move forward with last minute details being completed. We are still looking forward to the installation of the elevator in early February. As a part of this project, we have asked the congregation to renew or make commitments to the building fund. At this point we have had commitments come in for around \$1,700.00 monthly. This is a good beginning; however, we still have a way to go to be ready to begin repaying our loan for the construction project. If you have not had the opportunity to return the green commitment form you may do that at any time. You may place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning, drop it by the church office or mail it to the church. It is out of these funds that we will repay the loan for the new facilities. Thank you for continuing to keep this as a matter of prayer.

I am praying now about the possibility of taking mission trips this year. Of course, the COVID virus has made these decisions difficult. I have communicated with Shem Okello in Kenya and he tells me their COVID numbers are down and they are hopeful to begin getting a vaccine in February, so that is promising information. Last year, prior to the Corona virus shut down I was thinking we might go to Kenya in June of this year. That time frame is still possible but may be pushing things a little. We are also considering a return to Saugus to work with True Vine Church this summer. We have typically made that trip in the middle of July. This year is the fifth year of our five-year commitment to them. Although we were not able to go to Boston last summer, we did make them a part of our Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions and we were able to send them \$2,000.00 to help with their ministries. Please join me in praying for these possible trips.

Finally, please continue to pray for your church staff as we strive to minister to our church family and the community during these challenging times. And always remember that God loves you and so does your pastor. ~ *Pastor Charlie*

MISSIONARIES IN OUR MIDST

Many of you will remember Rachel Crotts, a young lady that worshiped with us for a couple of years. After finishing her degree, she taught school here in the county for a year and then felt called to go teach in Spain. I recently received an email from her letting us know that she has made it to there and has begun work at Camarma, Spain. She is teaching a 4th and 5th grade combined class at the Evangelical Christian Academy. She is already seeing the Lord working in the hearts of her students. Please continue praying for Rachel and for her students.



In January we had a young man named Matthew worship with and he introduced himself to me after the service. He and his wife are from Kansas City. They have felt called to the mission field and are making preparations to go to West Asia through Avant Ministries. They will be working in a city with a population of 15 – 20 million people. The people group they will be working with is around 60 million strong with only .01% Christian. Virtually all of these people profess Islam as their religion, although Western secularism has influenced many to worship the gods of money, sex, and power in their daily lives. They will be working with a team of missionaries from the Southern Baptist International Mission Board to try to plant churches that will reach this people group. Please add Matt, Katie and their young son Elias to your prayer list. Because they are going through Avant Ministries, they have to raise their own support. If the Lord would put it on your heart to support them financially see Pastor Charlie and he will share with you how you can do that.



The Church Council will meet on Monday, March 1 at 7:00pm. Church leaders, please mark your calendars and plan to be at this meeting. Watch the announcements for continuing updates.



April / May 2021 Newsletter Information is due to the Church Office by Monday, March 15th.

All Department or Committee heads submitting information should mark their calendars or set reminders accordingly. E-mail your articles to secretary@fbcoi.org.



Our Sunday School ministry continues to meet in small groups as space is allowed or in Zoom sessions. Classes are adapting to the guidelines as set forth by the CDC regarding small groups and I want to thank each teacher and Sunday School member for your continued efforts to teach and participate in the study of the Word of God each week. This quarter some of our classes are focusing on the book of Luke while others are studying human emotions as it relates to Scripture.

Our Sunday School ministry and small group Bible studies are the key to growing in our walk with Christ. Through Sunday School, small groups or a combination of both, all believers are called to be on mission to reach others for Christ in obedience to the Great Commission. Whether meetings take place in a church facility or in a home, each believer and member of a church is called to grow in their walk with Christ and share the gospel. In [Matthew 28:18-20](#), Jesus gave every believer a commission to be a disciple who makes disciples of every nation. This is called the Great Commission.

With that being said, the North Carolina State Baptist Convention has started an initiative in Discipleship. Disciple-making is a joy-filled, intentional, loving relationship that encompasses both evangelism and discipleship. Evangelism is the proclamation of God's good news of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in a way that others can understand so that they might turn from their sins and place their faith in Him. Discipleship is the ongoing journey of becoming more like Jesus and helping others do the same. One of my professors at Fruitland Baptist Bible College has said that we, as Southern Baptists, have done an okay job with our evangelism programs but we have failed in the Discipleship area. Our leaders at the State Convention have recognized that and they are encouraging Baptist churches in our state to develop programs and training to our new believers and church members, no matter where they are in their journey. Studies show that unless a new member establishes one or more meaning relationships within a few months, he or she is more likely to quietly leave through the "back door." Discipleship is modeling and teaching Christians the precepts of the Bible—mainly prayer, doctrine, Christian living, and worship.

A couple of Sundays ago, Pastor Charlie gave a powerful sermon regarding the events that have taken place this month in our nation. He made a very true statement, the church has failed in its part to go out and spread the Gospel, not only in this country, but in the world. We want to change that. We want to do our part in seeking the lost but not stop there. We want to do our part in growing and maturing each member of our church, no matter where you are in your walk.

This past Sunday Pastor Charlie started a sermon series from the Letter to the Philippians. In his sermon we heard that we are in partnership in the Gospel; that this is a lifelong process. We must stay in the Word and continue to grow and learn. Christ wants to mold us to look like Him.

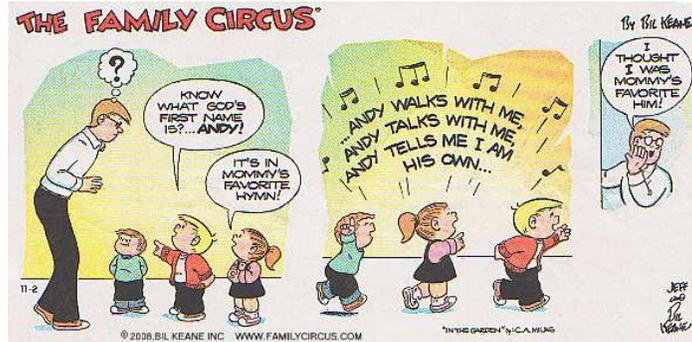
In the next two months I'll be attending training and seminars relating to Discipleship. This will enable us to develop a Discipleship model for our church. But it will take all of us, every member of the church.

"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Romans 15:4

A call is extended to you and a response is required! You have been given a precious and wondrous call without irresistible pressure, yet with passion and conviction. "Follow me." Want you walk with us? ~ In Christ, Jeffery Stutts



For all adults. Come and join the fun of participating in our newly organized Melody Bell Choir. Rehearsals will observe all of the social spacing requirements. So get out of the house and join us for an hour of musical fun. No music reading skills required. It's as easy as painting by numbers. This is ringing by colors. Individuals and couples are invited. Join us in the fellowship hall at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday or Thursday? The exact day to be determined by those who attend. Call Pastor Raleigh for more information or to let him know you want to participate.



It seems like forever since we last had a choir rehearsal. The congregation has expressed their disappointment in not hearing the choir the the choir misses not singing on Sundays. Coming on January 31st we will begin having our adult choir rehearsal on Sunday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. We will practice in the sanctuary (not the choir loft) where we can maintain social distancing. On Sundays we'll sit in reserved seating in the sanctuary. When it's time for the special music the choir will move to the choir loft and remain standing while observing social distancing. When the choir concludes the special music they will return to the reserved seating in the sanctuary. As we resume rehearsals this would be a great time for new and former members to join the choir. For more information or to join the choir contact Pastor Raleigh.

We are still trying to figure out any possible way that we can restart our "After School Music Club". With the questions as to if the kids will be home schooling or attending class our biggest difficulty how to get the kids to the church. If we can get a positive response from the parents being willing to bring their kids to the church and picking them up afterwards, we may be able to do it. All activities would be in the sanctuary where we can maintain social distancing. If you have any ideas or suggestions please share them with Pastor Raleigh.



Deacon Speakin'

To the saints in Christ at First Baptist Church of Oak Island, who are faithful brothers and sisters. Grace to you and peace from God our Father...I want to start with a few words Jesus shared with the disciples in Jerusalem before they left for the Kidron Valley,

"I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in Me and I in him produces much fruit, because you can do nothing without Me." John 15:5

I recently heard a story about how to look at the community, the friendship and relationships in body of the church should interact with one another and in this time of hopeful reconciliation in our nation I think it is appropriate to share now to remind us of who we are. It starts out comparing us and our relationships in the secular world to those of a bag of marbles. Much like some of us played with or carried around as children. Except I can't remember ever actually playing with them in the circle like some of you did. Mine were usually cannonballs in the world of GI Joe.

These marbles are slick, round, spherical objects that kind of clack around in the bag and if yours was like mine, with a little tear in the mesh, sometimes one of the hundred or so would fall out unnoticed. Never to be missed or thought of. There is just nothing really keeping them all together other than being close to one another in their location in the bag. It's a very loose association to say the least.

In Hebrews Chapter 10:19-25, Paul shares the following: "Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way He has opened for us through the curtain (that is, His flesh), 21 and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. 23 Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works, 25 not staying away from our worship meetings, as some habitually do, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day drawing near."

He points out first, where we, the Church get our source, our power and our strength. Through Christ. THEN he shows what that looks like as growth from that power. He points out the source and then shows how that fruits. Now if you compare the marbles to a bag of grapes, round, spherical objects very like those marbles. Well, they are kind of the same shape, right? Kind of the same size? Well, they are very different though. The grapes all have a common connection, a network. The Vine. Each grape has a place. It touches about four or five other grapes closely. It relates to a small gathering of other grapes. It affects them and interacts with them but not so much with the rest of the cluster. However, if it gets sick or start to blemish as it deteriorates, it doesn't go missing like a marble does it? It means something to the rest of the bunch. It is a marker of the health of the whole cluster. As a grape, I would know, something is coming my way, there is an organic connection. That one grape is an indicator to the rest of us. Similarly, if one goes missing you have a marker to tell you it's gone. The stubby end where the grape was, shows you it is missing and the gap stays the same. The marble fell out and was just gone but the grape tells you to go looking for something that is missing. The Vine has a big impact on the way the grapes function. The sap feeds each one and when the sap isn't flowing, if it is drying up, we can see that.

Paul points out at the end, that we should be concerned with one another. Don't neglect meeting together as some do, but encourage each other to gather all the more as "the day" draws near. The Marbles might have a common interest, social connections, music, hobbies, politics. But these are superficial connections. There is a connection in the body of Christ that supersedes and transcends a superficial connection. We are personally transformed, impacted by the story of Christ and what it does to each of us. It is a personal relationship, but never private. You can SEE the difference. You can SEE how connected a person is to the True Vine. Whatever is happening to one grape, is common to them all. It impacts them all. We are not alone. We are all transformed into acts of "love and good works". Our Church members are connected to one another, we matter to one another. Genuine Christian community begins with intentional attentiveness to one another. We pay attention to one another because we share a common love. We should cling to one another showing love and compassion.

In this time when we are being pushed apart by the different crisis of the world today. We must be ever more vigilant of each other. Pay attention, stir up each other, encourage and provoke each other to stay connected physically as much as possible. We are being driven apart by the world. Socially distanced is what we should be doing and this makes it hard to gather. Don't get me wrong, we should take care to keep each other safe. There is a reality we must acknowledge and that reality makes it harder to connect. As a result, we must be even more vigilant, more intentional about reaching out and encouraging each other to talk, to meet safely, to spend time together, because the connection needs to be shepherded and protected.

On that note, I encourage each of us to reach out intentionally each day to someone. We all have four or five "grapes" around us. Make a phone call, write a note, have a cup of coffee outside and socially distanced. Do all each of us can, until we can meet again, free of restraint and when we can, let's meet together physically so we can see each other and connect together in the True Vine.

In love, and grace, and peace, ~ Your Bother, Pete Key

Island Youth

Reaching for Higher Ground

Once again, I stand here with backflips and cartwheels from where I thought our schedule would be right now. With the quick rise in cases in November we went virtual again on December 13th and will remain virtual until Brunswick County is out of the red, or as cases are evaluated to

be declining steadily in our area. This last quarter we were able to get quite a bit done in our few months in-person:

- We were able to create a Halloween Party in-a-box for fifty residents of Good Shepherd Homeless Shelter.
- The youth collected food, clothing, blankets, bottled water, gift cards, and \$170 for Good Shepherd throughout November and by the time we took the last donations in December we were able to give them \$250 cash and three boxes of meat for their kitchen, alongside the donations we had collected.
- The youth collected \$70 cash, \$50 in gift cards, blankets, undergarments, feminine products, and t-shirts for the women of A Safe Place, donated in December.
- The youth helped organize and pack Thanksgiving boxes for the Evangelism Committee in November.

Meeting in-person was a blessing after such a long time virtual and, once again, we are looking forward to the time when we can be together-especially without face coverings and tables 6 feet apart. We have just adjusted to 8pm on Sunday nights, as to not interfere with Sunday suppers, and we have three upcoming in-person activities to come together as a group and have some semblance of togetherness. On Friday, January 29th, we will be meeting here at church and having a (socially distanced) movie night- watching Just Mercy and sharing Chick-fil-A for supper. The room will be set up for them to be spread out and be able to safely enjoy each other's company and share a movie and a meal. On Ash Wednesday, February 17th, we will have our annual pancake dinner kicking off this Lenten season. And, on the weekend of March 19-21st our Youth Council will be doing Student Leadership Training- reimagining what a leader looks like now and how our teens can be that leader in their schools, home, friend groups, our church, and our ministry. I am anxious to get back to our routine, in our space, and to be able to squeeze these feral teenagers of ours again. My hope and prayer is that we are not far from that time and that our youth are able to weather this storm stronger because of their faith and stronger in their faith. We have had the blessing of growth during this wild time and I am encouraged that with time for perspective shifts, we are seeing young people cling to their faith and finding hope in our Father in this time of uncertainty. Please continue to pray for our young people, their hearts, their families, their education, and our ministry to them.

Thank you,
Lauren McCoy



"The youth have been great volunteers.
Plus, they work for donuts!"



It's a wonderful time to be a child of God at First Baptist Church of Oak Island, amen? I am grateful to serve an unchanging God who is always faithful.

I am also grateful to serve in a church who is always willing to step up to serve our community. I was blown away by the support shown for Trunks of Treats. So many of you showed up to help stuff treat bags that we were able to fill 600 in under 30 minutes (and laughed a lot while we worked). Additionally, we had a wonderful turn-out of folks who showed our community we care as we conducted our first drive-thru event. It took flexibility and team work to pull it off, and that, paired with our love, made it a successful event. God provides exactly what we need. The last bag went to the last car, just before 7:00. God is good. Thank you to the Evangelism Committee for their partnership with this event.



Flexibility has been key as we have moved forward in discipleship and fellowship in these unprecedented times. Our children and their families came together on November 20 for an Indoor Drive-In Movie. We enjoyed fountain drinks, movie theatre candy, and popcorn as we watched Free Birds, a less than true story of the first Thanksgiving.



In December, each family received a copy of the book, Truth in the Tinsel, along with materials to complete the craft projects in this advent devotional. It carried each family on a daily journey from Isaiah's prophecy through the birth of Jesus.

This month, each child is receiving a gift bag with a parent/child devotional coloring book, colored pencils, hot chocolate, a coffee mug, chocolates, and a puzzle. If the number of positive COVID-19 cases in Brunswick County falls adequately, we will hold a time of fellowship in February and complete a mission project in March. Additionally, families will receive a copy of A Sense of the Resurrection, a 12-day journey that uses the five senses to help children understand Jesus's death and resurrection. As with Truth in the Tinsel, families will be provided with the materials to complete the projects that go with each devotion.

Looking further ahead, we are exploring all the ways we could conduct Vacation Bible School this summer, whether that is a drive-in or drive-thru experience, or a more traditional experience later in the summer. The health and safety of our children and volunteers is my greatest priority as we make plans to move forward. We are doing what we can to keep in touch, to keep our children engaged, and to keep our children growing as disciples. Their resilience is commendable, and together we continue to grow in stature, in wisdom, and in favor with God and man.

Thank you for your continued support of the Children's Ministries of our church and for continued prayers for our children. You are **appreciated**.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Key

Women's Ministry

“Relentless” – this is the WMU theme for this year. Our objective – “to be relentless in living authentic faith in Christ, seeking God in prayer, giving sacrificially, and witnessing to others.” Even in the midst of a pandemic, our ladies’ mission groups and GA’s have continued to find ways to encourage us to relentlessly share Christ’s love.

We filled over 90 shoeboxes for children around the world through Operation Christmas Child. We collected 208 pairs of socks for WMUNC’s annual Red Box Ministry for incarcerated women, helping the Brunswick Baptist Association exceed their goal. We helped provide food items for Thanksgiving baskets for ten families in our community. We collected toys for the Association Toy Store. And you were a part by helping us – Thank You!!

During December, we received the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. Our goal was \$8,000. As we have seen many times, God had a bigger goal, and your generosity continues to be a blessing. Our grand total received was \$10,678.25 – even larger than last year!

If you haven’t picked up the “Loving the Lost of the World Through Prayer” guide for the year, it’s not too late. This booklet helps us to pray for a different unreached people group each week this year. And don’t worry if you can’t pronounce most of the names – God will know.

Even though they are not able to meet on a regular basis, our GA’s have gotten together a couple of times recently. In November they had a cookie bake and delivered them to some of our church members. In December, they had another cookie bake, made Christmas door hangers and a caroling event.

In November, the Piecemakers group sent taggies and quilts to the Baptist Children’s Homes with our guest speaker, Danny Hawkins. This week they are having their annual retreat to Myrtle Beach, SC. While there, they are making flannel rag quilts for distribution as needed. And don’t forget they are still making masks for personal use or you may use them to love on friends and neighbors.

The Mary Greene Mission Group will be collecting jelly in **plastic containers** for Matthew’s Ministry backpacks during February. If you would like to help, you can drop off jelly beginning Wednesday, February 3.

Our Focus on WMU/Women’s Sunday will be February 14. Our guest speaker for the morning services will be Phyllis Elvington. We will be receiving the Heck-Jones Offering for NC WMU ministries that Sunday morning. Our ladies will also be assisting during worship. Be sure to join us in person or online.

Finally, as we move toward spring, begin to pray for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions as “The Mission Moves Forward”. The Week of Prayer will be March 7-14. Our offering goal will be \$10,000 - \$8,000 for Annie Armstrong offering and \$2,000 for True Vine Church in Saugus, MA. We will receive the offering March 7 – April 5.

Joan Carter
WMU Director



February

- 02 *Sue Dotson*
- 05 *Rosalie Wilson*
- 06 *Barbara McConaghie*
- 9 *Don McDaris*
- 11 *Faye Cashwell*
- 12 *Jeff Gibby & John Overpeck*
- 14 *Patricia Clark & Lisa Anderson*
- 15 *Gracie Duncan & Don Yeoman*
- 16 *Max Halstead*
- 17 *Adele Poston*
- 20 *Hugh Nobles*
- 22 *June Stephens*
- 23 *Randy Wilson*
- 27 *Gordon Browning*
- 29 *Jennifer Gilbert*

March

- 01 *Kat Adams; Doris Windham & David Justice*
- 03 *Ken Kiser*
- 04 *Ellery Davis & Janis Whitley*
- 06 *Jane Todd*
- 07 *Justin Hyer*
- 09 *Susan Heafner &*
- 11 *Chris Benjamin*
- 17 *Rebekah Gibby; Ken Palmeter & Helen Robinson*
- 21 *Jessica Faircloth*
- 23 *Onie Dennis*
- 25 *Steve Clark; Tammy Johnston & Janie McDaris*
- 27 *Marge Stanton*
- 29 *Sue Johnson*
- 31 *Justin Page*



February 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Property & Space- 7pm	3 Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	4 Lena Early- 7pm	5	6
7 Youth Virtual Bible Study- 8pm	8 Deacons- 7pm	9	10 Mission Action- 11am Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	11 Mary Greene- 6pm	12	13
14 WMU Sunday Youth Virtual Bible Study- 8pm ♥♥♥♥	15	16	17 <i>Youth Lent Pancake Dinner-6:30pm</i> Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	18 Piecemakers- 10am	19	20
21 Youth Virtual Bible Study- 8pm	22	23 Stewardship- 7pm	24 Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	25 Men's Prayer Group- 7pm	26	27
28 Youth Virtual Bible Study- 8pm						

March 2021



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Church Council- 7pm	2 Property & Space- 7pm	3 Youth March Missions- 6:30pm Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	4 Lena Early- 7pm	5	6
7	8 Deacons- 7pm	9	10 Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	11 Mary Greene- 6 pm	12	13 
14	15 April/ May Newsletter Info Due	16	17 Mission Action- 11am Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study - 7pm	18 Piecemakers- 10am	19 <i>Youth Council</i>	20 <i>Leadership Weekend</i>
21	22	23 Stewardship- 7pm	24 Prayer Mtg./ Bible Study- 7pm	25 Men's Prayer Group- 7pm	26	27
28 Palm Sunday	29	30	31			