



# The Connection Newsletter

## First Baptist Church

### Nickelsville, Virginia

11606 Nickelsville Highway, Nickelsville VA 24271

April 2020

Volume 50 Issue 4

#### “Let’s Make Sure We Don’t Get Too Comfortable”

Genesis 50:15-26

When we turn in our bibles to the book of Genesis we stand in awe of God’s creative ability, do we not? For in the opening verses of chapter one we see God’s power in brilliant fashion as he speaks the world into existence. So great was this spectacular display that God later reminds Job what the experience was like when he asked, “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4-7, NIV). Imagine that, if you will.

Now turn in your bibles to the closing verses in the book of Genesis. What do you see? What began in glorious splendor and the creation of mankind in the Garden of Eden ends with a broken-hearted family and the closing of a casket in a foreign land called Egypt. How can we explain it? How could something start off so well and end so badly? Well, actually it’s quite simple - sin entered the picture and seemingly destroyed everything God intended.



But before you shut your bibles let me caution you not to write God off just yet - for his grace is always greater than our sin, is it not? And his grace is revealed clearly in vv. 24-26 of that last chapter wherein Joseph said, “I am about to die. But God will surely come to your aid and take you up out of this land to the land he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And Joseph made the sons of Israel swear an oath and said, ‘God will surely come to you aid, and then you must carry my bones up from this place.’ So Joseph dies at the age of a hundred and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was placed in a coffin in Egypt.” But what does it mean and what is the application for us during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Throughout his word to us God continually cautions us not to get too comfortable in this life. Not in our location, our culture, our way of life, nor even in our relationship with him and one another. Everything, and I do mean everything, in life is short-lived and ever changing. And never before have we been better reminded of this than in the past few months. Who would have ever thought that our lives and way of life could have

Please see “Too Comfortable?” on Pg. 2

## A "BIG HELLO" To

*To all Our Church Family*

## From First Baptist Church

#### UPCOMING ITEMS OF INTEREST AND OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ Deacons Meet- 1st Tuesday every other month unless otherwise noted
- ◆ Baptist Women Meet- 1st Tuesday of each month 6:30 PM
- ◆ GA’S meet- 1st. & 3rd. Tuesday of the month. FLC 3:30-5:00 PM during school months.
- ◆ New Web Page - We have been hard at work developing a new web page for our church that will be much more user friendly and interactive than our older one. It looks as if we may have this available online within the next week or so.
- ◆ Another thing we’ve discovered in working on our web page and additional methods of outreach is the need for several new Life Groups to engage in bible study. If you’re interested in leading a group, let’s connect.

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**“Too Comfortable?”**

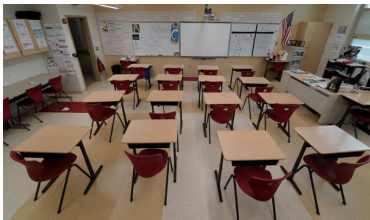
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been so drastically altered by a virus that first appeared in a faraway place called Wuhan, China? But, like it or not, here we are in the 21st century experiencing a national lockdown on everything we knew, loved, and took for granted - without exception.

In looking backward on Joseph and his father Jacob’s (Israel) lives they too experienced similar circumstances to what we are now undergoing. Both had good lives that were tremendously blessed by God himself; yet both experienced major interruptions. Jacob’s interruptions came when he fled his father’s house in fear of his life after cheating Esau out of his God-given birth rights. Joseph’s interruptions came after sharing a simple dream with his over-jealous brothers. One could look at them and say - they were simply getting what they deserved in both cases. After all, doesn’t the bible say “thou shalt not covet?” and “one should never cast their pearls before the swine?” Well, yes it does in both cases but that’s clearly a topic of considerable discussion that we will save for a later date.

In the middle of January the Center for Disease Control confirmed the first American case of a new coronavirus that had already claimed the lives of six people in China. By late February and early March we realized that our country was headed toward a national lockdown created by what was now labeled as the COVID-19 pandemic. Little did we realize, at the time, how drastically and quickly our lives and circumstances would change.

Almost overnight we experienced the shut down of our way of life in America as our school systems, colleges, universities, restaurants, as well as many of our factories and manufacturing facilities shut their doors. Our hospital and nursing facilities were locked down to outside visitors and families found themselves distanced from loved ones. And yes, whether we liked it or not or even agreed with everything that was happening, this eventually forced us to greatly alter the way we worship. Pastors who wanted to connect with their church family were forced into new territory that most of us were unfamiliar with and unprepared for.



By Saturday, March 21st we were forced to make major adjustments in the way we would gather for worship the following day as we began “streaming” our services live on Facebook. At the time I was thinking that

none of this could have happened at a worse time because churches around the world were preparing to celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. But it was during those moments of utter darkness that God began speaking and I must confess I was positioned to listen well.

As God spoke he reminded me that his church was not about a building. In fact, he clearly revealed that his church is about movement - the movement of His Spirit, working through his people.

Please see “Too Comfortable?” on Pg. 3

**Our Church Van**

If you haven’t had the pleasure of riding our new church van you’ve missed a great experience. It is indeed a comfortable ride and is being used weekly as we pick children up for bible study and it’s also being used by many other groups in our church.

The gifts that we have received recently have brought the amount needed to pay our van down to \$8,000.00.

Truly God has been good to us and he’s accomplished all of this through your generous gifts. May the Lord continue to give us his good guidance in what our gift might be to retire our indebtedness. Thanks so much for your support and encouragement.

**Vacation Bible School 2020**

Our dates for VBS this year are Sunday, June 21st - Friday, June 26th and our theme is Concrete Cranes. So let’s make sure we grab a hardhat and toolbelt as we explore a world of concrete and cranes, rivets and rebar, bulldozers and backhoes. Together we will learn to build our faith on Jesus Christ by uncovering the truth about him.

Our VBS shirts are in and the cost is \$7.00. Our theme verse will be Philippians 1:6 which says, “I am sure of this, that he who started a good



work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ.” (CSB). Our motto is: Jesus! Our strong foundation! And our Christ connection is: The foundation of the gospel is faith. Jesus lived a perfect

life and died the death that we deserve. By grace, God saves everyone who trusts in Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Throughout the week teachers will lead students to build their faith on the foundation laid by Christ himself.

Our VBS Director, Karianne Counts, will be sharing more with us as we get closer to this time.

If you would like to work in VBS let Karianne know as quickly as possible. This is a flagship event of our church that requires the help of many people to make it happen.

Let’s do our best to make our 2020 VBS the best we’ve ever experienced. Many children, teens, and adults will come to know & experience Jesus through this exciting week.

We may have to change the dates for VBS we will let you know in the near future.

## “Too Comfortable?”

Cont. from Pg. 2

He reminded me that his church is not institutional but relational. As such, we could spin our wheels for the next 50 years discussing what he did yesterday or we could join him where he is working today. I don't know how you feel but that for me is as we say a “no brainer.” But he also reminded me that the church was indeed his church because he, through Christ, purchased her with his precious blood. Therefore his church, in both Nickelsville and around the world, was not reliant on human beings for her success.

With all of this in mind we were faced with major decisions. Would we sit back and lick our wounded egos? Or move forward as best we could by faith, relying completely on him? The choice was ours and ours alone. So on Sunday, March 22nd we launched our worship streaming live on Facebook. Oh there were some things we did as always like our annual Easter devotionals during Passion Week. But the element of gathering together as we always have on Easter Sunday was gone, or was it? And the recurring question coming to my mind was - have we become too comfortable? In our way of living in America? But moreso than anything - in our worship of God?

For more than a month we've gathered online as we stream and we now have multiple Life Groups who are meeting online weekly as they utilize Zoom Video Conferencing and other means of communication. But what does all of this look like for us? Well folks, let me be the first to admit that I greatly miss seeing each of you. The loving fellowship we experience as we gather is a small taste of Heaven itself. All of us miss shaking hands, hugging necks, and telling each other how much we love one another. Yet there is something I must share with you. In the last month, God has used your church to reach more than 75,000 (seventy-five thousand) people with the good news of the gospel. And might I add this does not include the people that each of us have been able to reach through telephone calls, text messages, and other forms of communication that we engage in daily. Neither does it include the people who are joining us as we engage in online bible studies through our Life Groups and School of Theology.

My prayer is that each of us will look beyond the outward circumstances that temporarily surround us to the opportunities that God is opening before us. I think he is showing us a world that we never knew to exist. As such, we dare not revert back to our former ways of “doing church as usual” but that we “fix our eyes on Jesus” and grasp the future that awaits us.

Let's get back to that closed coffin that held Joseph's body. Hundreds of years later the children of Israel would be forced to make a choice - follow Moses out of Egypt as they carried the coffin of Joseph with them or remain slaves for the rest of their lives. Thankfully they chose to walk by faith and not by sight. As such, they experienced deliverance and were able to enter the Promised Land. My question is: Will you join me and the rest of our faith family as we continue in our homeward journey?

We look forward, in great anticipation, to that time when we can gather once again as a church family; however, until that time please don't forget that your church is completely dependent on your financial support in fulfilling Christ's mission!

**Brother Steve**

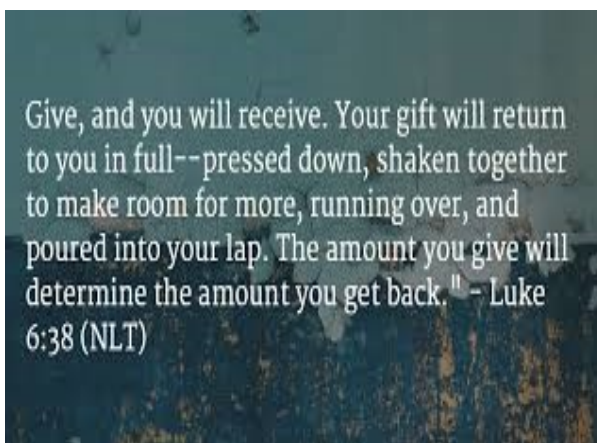
## Our 2020 “Great Offering”

Several years ago God inspired an idea within our church that we called a “Great Offering.” Since its inception this time of sacrificial giving has proven to a tremendous blessing to everyone in our church, community, and beyond.

What began as little more than an idea has morphed into the financial backbone of our Youth / Adult Missions Programs and touched the lives of hundreds, if not thousands, of people on the receiving end of our mission endeavors.

This year we are again asking you to give beyond your normal gifts and give sacrificially to support the mission endeavors of our church.

Even though you can give to our Great Offering at any time we will not officially take that offering until we are able to gather again in corporate worship on Sunday morning. And as usual everything you give beyond our weekly budgeted amount will go to support our missions outreach. Thanks so much for your continued and much-needed support!



## Electronic Giving Portal

Supporting God's work through your church in her mission endeavors is fast and easy for each of us. And one of the ways we can do this is through our electronic giving portal which can be accessed through e-mail, on our web page, or on our Church Facebook page. Or, if you're viewing this newsletter electronically all you have to do is click on the link below and follow the instructions.

And please know this: Regardless of the way we choose to support the ministry and mission of your church it is greatly appreciated by everyone. Thanks so much for your generosity in advancing the Kingdom! And please, feel good about your generosity. If it weren't for your continued financial support during these tough times the gospel message would be greatly hindered. God is very much at work through each of us to touch the lives of many and change their circumstances.



[Online Giving Portal.htm](#)

**Worship Opportunities**  
**SUNDAY MORNING**  
 8:45 AM - Early Worship  
 10:00 AM - Life Groups (all ages)  
 11:00 AM Morning Worship

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**WEDNESDAY EVENING**  
 Choir Practice 6:00 PM  
 Adult and Children Bible Studies 7:00 PM

**Worldwide Missions Unlimited**

Looking forward to getting back to the fellowship with our Baptist Women. We have missed everyone so much.

Also looking forward to a new year with our GA'S. Our prayer is that all the girls has a wonderful summer and that next year will be great year for them.



**Mowing Season 2020**

Once again it is mowing season and increases in gas prices force us to pay even more to keep our cemetery looking nice. During the 2020 mowing season it will cost approximately \$6,000 in mowing expenses alone.

As the cemetery is completely dependent upon private contributions to cover its costs, we ask everyone who can to make a generous contribution to the effort. Remember it belongs to all of us and maintaining it is each of our responsibilities.

While the upkeep of the Community Cemetery is not the responsibility of any one Church, donations to the Cemetery Fund can be sent to the Office of the 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church of Nickelsville, 11606 Nickelsville Highway, Nickelsville, VA 24271.

**Losses in our church family**

**Joyce Meade's mother went home to be with the Lord. Remember Joyce and family in Prayer.**

We are in the process of building a brand new website for our church family. Much work has already gone into this project and we're looking to make the transition to our new site within a matter of days.



Please join us in praying that God will use this for his honor and glory and that it will indeed be a tool that will further his kingdom.

The launch of our streaming our worship services, a new website and additional outreach that we are now engaging in on social media have been very challenging, yet rewarding.

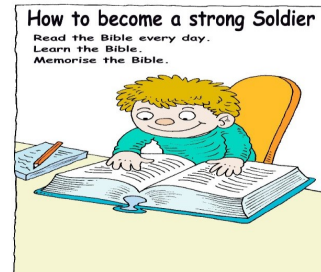
**"Holy Humor"**



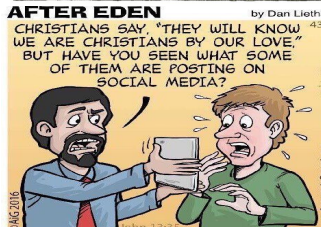
He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. — PSALM 147:3 NW



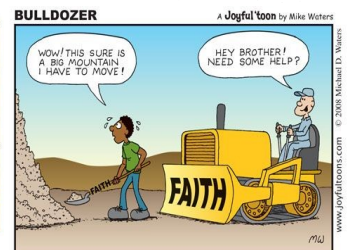
The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. — PSALM 19:1-2 NW



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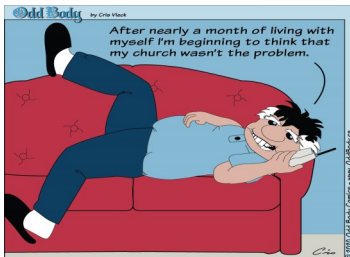
Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Ephesians 4:29



that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. — ROMANS 1:12 NW



Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things. — PSALM 107: 8-9 NW



Mother Theresa speaking a great truth of perspective for life.

