



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

## Nickelsville

11606 Nickelsville Highway, Nickelsville VA 24271

Spring 2022

Issues 1-3

### “Our Hope and Promise in Easter”

Jn. 11:25-26

For the last two years the news in our nation and world has been every-thing but promising. Glimmers of hope that we dreamed of were quickly extinguished by rising pandemic deaths, the depression created by social distancing, racial violence, political discord, and escalating aggression around the world. In the midst of such turmoil and upheaval, who dares to risk delight?

Looking backward it seems that instead of focusing on and celebrating the remarkable progress God has given us the media and public health officials were wary of misinforming again. So, they focused their report- ing on the threat of variants, the need for continued mask wearing, and concerns about things unknown, despite the amazing fact that the COVID- 19 vaccines provide a powerful defense against dying from the disease.

In the end, whether we choose to be vaccinated or not, eventually all of us will die. But there’s one thing about it that we sometimes overlook, the amazing news of Easter cannot be downplayed. The words that Jesus spoke to two heartbroken sisters who were mourning the loss of their brother remain true, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who be- lieves in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believ- ing in me will never die” (John 11:25-26). So what are the implications and hope for us in this glorious resurrection that Jesus spoke of and per- sonally experienced?

It may surprise you but in taking the time to Google this I discovered that in 2021 there were more than 4,000 recognized religions in the world. These consist of churches, congregations, faith groups, tribes, cultures and movements; however, *Christianity alone is the faith that has a living founder*. So Christianity is not what we consider to be good advice, or even a faith to live by. No, it is a faith that is powerful enough to die by. It is good news from the cemetery. It is good news from an open, empty tomb. It is good news about God for sinners everywhere.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ not only provides us with hope of eter- nal life, it also provides us with the certainty of eternal life. The writer of the book of Hebrews openly declared, “... Jesus is able to save everyone that comes to God by him because he is alive and well in Heaven where he is continuously interceding for us ...” (Heb. 7:25, translation mine). How powerful is this? Let me put it this way - the resurrection of Jesus catapults our journey as Jesus followers far beyond hope to the realm of certainty. This is the difference between believing and knowing.

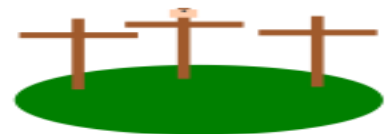
Please see “Our Promise” on Pg. 2

## A "BIG HELLO" To To Our Church Family

## From First Baptist Church

### UPCOMING ITEMS OF INTEREST AND OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ GA’S meet– 1st. & 3rd. Tuesday of the month. FLC 3:30-5:00 PM during school months.
- ◆ Baccalaureate Service for all graduates on May 22nd at 2 PM.
- ◆ Youth & Adult Mission trip will be June 5th –10th.
- ◆ VBS will be June 19th –24th.
- ◆ We have Dinner Church every 4th Tuesday Of the month. At the FLC.



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**“Our Promise”**

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Before his arrest and crucifixion his followers believed Jesus to be the Son of God. But at Calvary their hopes were dashed. After his resurrection and physical appearances to them they knew, without doubt, that he was the Son of God. Their hope was turbo-charged! They were confident! Their faith was galvanized! It had not been misplaced! And might I add, neither has ours!

Looking backward on their faith journey they, perhaps for the first time, realized their experience with Jesus was much more than an inspirational journey. He was now in their midst, with them, instructing them for 40 additional days (see Acts 1:3-8). And after telling them to “... wait for the gift ...” from the Father there’s no doubt that his followers understood the promise recorded by John when he said, “I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.” (Jn. 14:18). Is this not exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came to indwell all born again believers?

But what about us? Do we, as followers of Jesus, understand that the resurrection of Christ ensures us of a living companion throughout our journey of life? Do we, as children of God, realize that we can face life and everything it hurls at us with the assurance that God Himself is with us, watching over us, and protecting us from all forms evil?

Now, let’s get to those other 4,000 recognized religions that span the globe. What are they know for? They’re known for protecting and appeasing their gods. Their gods have a need to be coddled and safeguarded from evil. Their gods are cold and lifeless! The founders of their movements are rotting in their graves.

In contrast, our God is quite capable of caring for himself. Our God came down to us where he lived among us, died for us, and arose from the dead. He is alive and well! He lives within us! He fills us with excitement and joy! He is our lifelong companion! And he is coming again to take us home to Heaven! What a Savior! He is worthy of our praise! He is worthy of our lives! He is worthy of our all!

This Easter let us turn off our evening news and social media feeds and give some time and thought to the great things God is doing in our midst. And, as we do, we’ll stand amazed in his presence.

Have a great Easter!

**Steve & Sandy**



**Appalachian School of Theology**

When you’re driving down Hwy. 23 South through Weber City look across from Price Less Supermarket on the left and check out the billboard highlighting God’s plan of salvation and our school of theology.



We’d like to take this opportunity to thank the corporation responsible for this that’s chosen to remain anonymous. God is doing great things in our midst through his people. And, if you’re looking for an opportunity to engage in theological training at an affordable price then please check us out and connect with us at [astincva.org](http://astincva.org) or shoot us an email at [astincva@gmail.com](mailto:astincva@gmail.com)

I think the three crosses at Calvary depicted by this billboard send a powerful message which the world needs to hear at Easter. And should someone ask, what the 3 crosses represent, let’s share the following story. At Calvary there were 3 crosses on which three different men died. The first cross on the far left depicts the rebellious thief who dying in his sin to be eternally separated from God. The second cross on the far right depicts the penitent thief who was dying to his sin by trusting Christ as Savior. As such, Jesus said unto him, “Today you will be with me in Paradise.” And the third cross which is in the center depicts Jesus as the One dying as payment for our sin.

Each person who will ever live is represented in this picture. We will either die in our sin and face eternal separation from him or we will trust him as Savior and die to our sin which guarantees us a home with him in Heaven. Either way, the choice is ours. Please choose wisely and encourage others to do the same.

God is indeed doing great things in our midst through our school of theology. This semester we are sending out 33 weekly Zoom invitations to our students and facilitators who are joining us both in person and online these life-changing classes.

Out of our enrollees we are seeing leaders emerge and develop for every area of life and ministry. And might I add, these leaders are indeed changing the world and advancing the Kingdom. All to the glory of God! To him be praise!

### “Is Online Church Real Church?”

Like most churches we were blindsided by the COVID-19 pandemic. Almost overnight the things we considered to be “the norm” in life morphed into a nightmare. For the safety of everyone the great majority of churches closed their doors and ministry and missions outreach came to a screeching halt. We were forced to make major adjustments in every area of church life but particularly in the realm of worship.

We adjusted quickly and began streaming our services live on Facebook but we like everyone else found ourselves second-guessing how meaningful and effective such a ministry could be. With this in mind please read carefully the following story.

In August of 2021 I got a late Saturday evening call from a young lady whose mother Mary had recently been diagnosed with terminal liver cancer and lived in Poquoson, Virginia. She asked if I would give her mom a call because she knew her mom joined us in online worship weekly and commented daily on my posts as a pastor. Due to the hour of the call I waited until the following day to make the connection. To my surprise Mary died only minutes before I called.



(John & Mary Blake)

Shortly thereafter the family asked if we could host a celebration of life service for Mary. In case you didn't know, Poquoson is a six-and-a-half-hour drive from Nickelsville and while I was willing to make the drive they asked if we could record the service and upload it to YouTube for their use. We assured them we could but our people chose to go beyond this as they stepped up, made DVDs of the service, and mailed those to the family immediately. This was used later in a time of worship celebrating Mary's life that was held two months later.

Following this I received a call from her husband John who said that he and one of his children were planning to fly down and join us in worship. As such, they arrived one Sunday morning and at the close of the service John, who is 92 years young, came forward to publicly profess his faith in Jesus Christ. After praying together he shared that this was something he felt very much led to do.

Please see (Continued, opposite side)

### “Is Online Church Real Church?”

(Continued)

As you might guess, we were thrilled.

In a telephone conversation several weeks later I discovered that John had been baptized much earlier in life but he went on to say, “I join you weekly in online worship and I believe in everything you're doing to advance the kingdom. I want to partner with you in these efforts. I want to join the church if that's possible.” As you might guess, I was surprised and responded by saying, “I love it and while it will be a first for us, I think we can make it happen. I'll mention it to the church Sunday and see what their pleasure it.”

When I shared his thoughts with our church the response was sheer delight as we welcomed John into our fellowship. But then I asked a question: “What are we going to do when someone makes an online profession of faith and wants to be baptized?” Our people responded by saying, “Well, we'll just go wherever they are and take care of those baptism ourselves.” As your pastor, all I can say is, Praise God! He is good and I'm thankful to serve a group of people that's ready and willing to join God wherever we see him working.

John is so excited and continues to join us online in worship but he's now engaged in midweek bible study via Zoom and is thoroughly enjoying the experience.

If you're one of the skeptics who doubts the authenticity of online worship or God moving in ways that are beyond our imagination my prayer is that God will do the same and more in your church and life. But please remember, God has been doing things like this since the first century. If you're still doubtful, take a moment and look at the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian Treasurer in Acts 8:26-40.

Let's make sure we don't allow the opportunity to slip through our fingers but at the same time let's make sure we never substitute our online presence for personal face-to-face interaction with others.

When he gave the Great Commission Jesus already knew the internet would be invented and developed. He also knew that laptops and tablets would replace paper and pencils. He could foresee the smartphones and other means of communication that we would become accustomed to. As such, I believe he was saying, “In time, I'm going to provide you with the tools to take the gospel message around the world. Seize the opportunity when it arrives. Use any and every means to reach those who are not connected. I love them and have room for them at my table and in my family. And remember, I'm right here alongside you in all you're doing.”

Is online church real church? If you're still skeptical, you might want to ask John and his family. I think you'll find his testimony and experience to be both personal and powerful indeed.

If you're online let me encourage you to share our online stream with your family and friends.



**Worship Opportunities**  
**SUNDAY MORNING**  
 8:45 AM - Early Worship  
 10:00 AM - Life Groups (all ages)  
 11:00 AM Morning Worship (Streamed Live)  
**MONDAY EVENING**  
**APPALACHIAN SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**  
**MEETS AT OUR FLC**  
**“SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP CLASS”**  
 6:30 - 9:00 PM  
**WEDNESDAY EVENING**  
 Choir practice 5:45 PM  
 Bible Study@ 7:00 PM (in person & online)

**Missions Engagement Opportunities:**

Each week our church is engaged in mission outreach opportunities that include:

- Preparing, serving, and delivering food.
- Lighter construction work such as the building of handicap ramps.
- Assisting sister churches in our area and region in building projects.
- Teaching opportunities to work with all age groups.
- Bus ministry opportunities for our mid-week services. Both drivers and riders are needed.
- Leadership / Coordination in disaster response opportunities.
- If you wish to partner with us by contributing financially to these ongoing missions / ministry opportunities just click on the following link in our E-edition of the newsletter to do this.



Online Giving Portal.htm

Please know that support is greatly needed and deeply appreciated in whatever way you choose to partner with us in the advancement of the Kingdom. God bless you for your thoughtfulness! Your church needs you and you need your church.



**“Holy Humor”**

