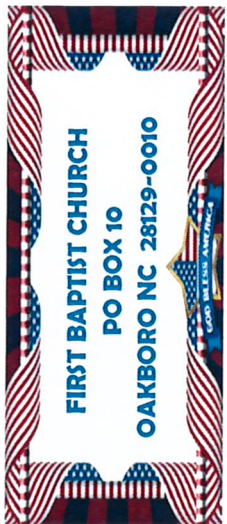


Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
PAID
Permit #3
Oakboro NC



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



FIRST BAPTIST
OAKBORO

The Communicator

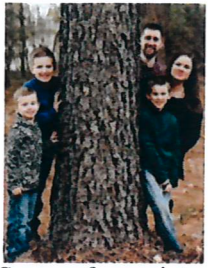
VOL. XXXI No. 7

June 29, 2020



PO Box 10
322 N Main Street
Oakboro, NC 28129
www.fbcoakboro.org
firstbaptistoakboro@gmail.com

Rev. Jonathan Waits, Pastor
Office (704) 485-4313
pastorjwaits@gmail.com
(804) 896-4520
www.the-nexus.blog



Well, we are finally almost here. It feels like another lifetime that we last met for live, in-person worship services. The date, if you're keeping track, was March 8th. From everything I have seen and heard, as I have prayed diligently for wisdom, as I have sought counsel from the wisest sources I know of, we are still on track to reopen for in-person worship services this coming Sunday. In doing this, I know that we are one of the latest arrivals to the party in this area.

Some of our sister churches began meeting again weeks ago. Some just this past week. I don't know of any who will yet begin after we do.

Some of you have been chomping at the bit for us to get going again. You've been seeking out other churches in the area who have already started meeting just so you can be once again in the setting you know and love so well. You're just about ready to throw caution to the wind if only you can be in church again. Others of you are still not yet comfortable with the idea of in-person gatherings. Recent surges in COVID cases have only served to confirm your discomfort with the idea.

As I announced yesterday morning, we are going to ask that you please wear a mask when you come to worship. As we also talked about yesterday morning and the previous Sunday as well (not to mention some of Pastor Nate's Facebook devotionals over the previous few weeks), we are a divided group on that front as well. Some won't come because we are asking that. Some won't come for fear that others will not fully abide by it. Some are grateful we're doing it. Some are skeptical, but so excited to be back they are willing to put that aside and go with it anyway.

Friends, if we are not careful, this will divide us. If we do not approach this matter with the utmost of humility and grace, it will tear us apart. We have an enemy in this world who would like to see nothing more than for us to be rendered entirely ineffective in the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ into this community and beyond because we are so focused on being upset with each other for believing differently than we do about how we can safely carry out the call our faithful God has placed on us as a church, that we can't spare any time or attention for the things that matter most. As I said last week, we cannot let differences of opinion divide us. It is not an overstatement to say that nothing less than the eternal fate of the world around us is at stake. So, what do we do? Three things.

First, we recommit to loving one another. As I said this past Sunday, the church always thrives when we love one another. We love one another in this time and place by taking all the precautions we possibly can save not actual being in the same room. And whatever you happen to feel about the precautions I laid out this past Sunday morning, let me offer you one reason why they matter so very

much: There are folks in our community who do not have a relationship with Jesus, but who take COVID-19 very seriously. If the Holy Spirit draws them to one of our worship services in the next few weeks and it looks like we aren't taking it at least as seriously as the local McDonalds is taking it, there is a great likelihood that they'll be turned off, not just from our church, but from the Gospel itself. As the apostle Paul said, "I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some." If doing something as simple as having masks for everyone in the room removes a barrier that allows an unbeliever to connect with Jesus, is that not worth it?

Second, and in this same vein, we remember who we are. God designed us to be a people with whom anyone can connect to grow in Christ and reach out for His kingdom. That's who we are as a church. But, since we are a church, that means we are an integral part of God's kingdom-advancing work in this world. It is a cliché to say it, but we are God's Plan A for bringing the Gospel to the world and there is no Plan B. We're it. That means we must funnel everything we do through the lens of this question: Will this serve the advancement of the kingdom of God? If it will, we do it. We must do it. If it won't, we can't do it no matter how strongly we may feel about it. If one effort or another will see the Gospel advanced in the hearts and minds of someone who doesn't have that and is in line with who God designed us specifically to be, we must set aside all of our personal preferences to move together in this direction.

As for what this looks like in practice, starting this coming Sunday we are going to begin a new series called "Telling Our Story" in which we will walk together through the story of the earliest church in Acts. As we tell their story, we will find ours and how we can be faithful to it along the way. You will not want to miss a single part of this journey.

Third, and most importantly, pray. A community that prays together, grows together. Commit to praying fervently for these three things as we prepare to meet again in person this Sunday. Pray for our love. Pray that a spirit of love will descend powerfully in our midst, and we will operate through the lens of Jesus' own love for us in all that we do. Pray for our unity. Pray that we will be united in heart & mind around who God made us to be and what He has called us to do. Pray for the Gospel's advance. Pray that God's kingdom will be revealed in our midst in such a way that the lost around us are drawn to the life that is truly life.

These are challenging times and they will require grace and love and humility in abundance if we are going to be able to thrive through them. But, with the abiding help and presence of our faithful God, we will do it.

Blessings to you,
Pastor Jonathan



In memory of **Earl Greene**, donations were given to the Building Fund by:
Tracy & Lisa Lowder
Chip & Dot Alsobrooks
Doris Hatley
Cliff & Lynn Edwards
Wiley & Joyce Little
Ted & Jewell Parker
Brooks & Jane Barnhardt
Sue Greene

In memory of **Roy Helms**, contributions were made to the Building Fund by:
Tracy & Lisa Lowder
Doris Hatley
Wiley & Joyce Little
Ted & Jewell Parker
Brooks & Jane Barnhardt

In memory of **Bonda Whitley**, donations were made to the Building Fund by: Blessed Assurance Sunday School Class
Doris Hatley
Brooks & Jane Barnhardt
Deborah Tucker
Ted & Jewell Parker
First Baptist Church, Oakboro

Contributions were given to the Building Fund in memory of **Jimmy Foxx**, Robbie Fox's dad, by
Ted & Jewell Parker
Jim & Cheryl Cameron
The Worship Choir
Brooks & Jane Barnhardt

In memory of **Gladys Yow**, Joyce Little's sister, donations were made to the Building Fund by Jim & Cheryl Cameron and The Worship Choir.

The Worship Choir gave contributions to the Building Fund in honor of **Harold Floyd**.

In honor of **Blessed Assurance Sunday School class**, a donation was given to the Building Fund by Harold & Louise Floyd.



"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is thy name in all the earth, who hast displayed thy splendor above the heavens?" Psalm 8:1-2

Psalm 8 is an example of what a hymn should be, celebrating the glory and the grace of God. C. S. Lewis, in *Reflections on the Psalms*, reminds us that "to glorify God is to enjoy Him."

Majesty combined with intimacy characterizes our relationship with God. Isaiah witnessed the holiness of God: "Woe to me, He cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the king, the Lord Almighty." Isaiah 6:5

On the other hand, God wants us to approach His throne with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace (Hebrews 4:16) from **A Musician Looks at the Psalms** – Don Wyrzten

In this fourth month of the global pandemic, continue to celebrate the "Glory and Grace of God."

"Enjoy" His Presence!
Dana B. Jenkins



Congratulations on New Baby Girl

Margie Helms welcomed new great-granddaughter, **Avery Kate McCallum** on June 25, 2020. She weighed 7 pounds, 14 ounces, and measured 20¾ inches long. Her parents are Emily & Nate McCallum and grandparents are Tim & Brenda Huneycutt. New adventures for all!



"Dear OFB, Thank you all so much for the memorial to the Building Fund to remember our mother. She loved this church family so very much – not being able to be with you was one of the hardest parts of her leaving Oakboro.

While we miss her terribly, we take comfort that she is in a more beautiful place, completely healed and catching my Daddy up on all he's missed in the last 20 years. The love and legacies they have left us are cherished beyond words. I hope the love and time they gave to OFB will live on there in some small way. Thank you again for your thoughtfulness."

God bless you!

Beth Sharpe, Robby Whitley & Families

Weird and Uncomfortable



Well, we're here. It's time to get back together. Our first Sunday is scheduled for this Sunday, July 5th. We have student nights set on the calendar that are being announced probably at the time you're sitting down to read this. It is an exciting time for us and rightfully so. We can't praise God enough for this awesome occasion. After these feelings of excitement dial down, and they will, feelings are fleeting. We're left to look around and start to compare our current church worship environment to pre-COVID church worship environments. The differences will be massive, and that is probably putting it mildly.

Think about what student nights will be. Instead of being able to meet in each group's designated space, all groups will meet in the comparatively huge fellowship hall, circled around awkwardly in uncomfortable plastic chairs sitting at plastic tables, and unable to even give someone else sitting across from you a high 5. Weird.

But in this (let's be honest) dangerous, and uncomfortable setting, we as Christians will find joy, peace, and contentment if our hearts are set in the loving way in which so many passages of Scripture describe. We've heard so many of these in recent weeks from Pastor Jonathan from sermons given out of books like Romans and 1 Corinthians. The fact of the matter is that we are still broken humans. Even after aligning our hearts in love and understanding toward our siblings in Christ, we will still feel uncomfortable in this new worship setting. But what if there was an example of someone doing the right thing while uncomfortable? Well, of course there is! We have all the stories of Jesus living in uncomfortable situations and ALWAYS doing the loving and gracious thing.

We could explore so many stories but think of just this one as an example. In John chapter 8 we see Jesus and the woman caught in adultery. Right before this woman was to be stoned, the religious leaders put Jesus in an uncomfortable spot. It was also weird because normally the woman AND the man caught in adultery would have been brought out for stoning. We don't see any man in this story. They tried to test him to get an obvious wrong answer out of him. If he said stone her, he would be accused of being unloving and a hypocrite to previous teachings of his. If he said don't stone her, he would be accused of not following the law. It would have been extremely easy for Jesus to avoid the uncomfortableness of the situation by not giving a direct answer. Jesus did not shy away from the uncomfortable situation. We don't know exactly what he wrote in the sand, and scholars debate what it was all the time, but we can get a hint of what it was based off the religious leaders' reaction. The leaders left after Jesus wrote whatever it was, beginning with the older ones. Whatever it was, it made THEM uncomfortable instead of Jesus. Jesus

turned the tables on them! You see Jesus had no real reason to be uncomfortable because he had no sin to give him a reason to be uncomfortable. But the religious leaders had plenty of sin to be uncomfortable about. Verse 7 declares this when Jesus tells whoever has no sin to cast the first stone. Did anyone cast a stone? No. Why? Because they all had sinned. This made them uncomfortable.

So, what do we take from this as we gather back together in an uncomfortable environment? What causes this uncomfortableness? Just like in the story Jesus was in, sin of course. Now for us, that could mean sin in two areas: sin in our own lives and hearts or sin present in the lives and hearts of others in the same environment as us. For us to achieve a comfort level in this new environment, these two areas must be cleared of sin.

The first is personal. We all must look at the cross to remove any sinful attitudes, preferences, biases, prejudices, or anything else that is in our hearts. Christ says so many times, the Spirit gives guidance and help in this matter. But the second is trickier. We've talked for several weeks now on how to have unity when coming back together. When we need to help others remove their sin, we must approach it so carefully. How to do this? Look at how Jesus did it. Was it a life or death issue in his case? Yes, a woman was about to die. How did he address it? Not by yelling or causing a scene or even preaching at them about their wrongs, but by simply bringing to light the thing that made them uncomfortable: their sin. He did it also by bringing this to light in a firm but non-aggressive manner. These lessons from Jesus' behavior, well let's be honest, we need his help to emulate them. We can't do them on our own. However, the fact remains, Jesus was in an uncomfortable spot but made decisions that pleased his Father up above, we can, with his help do the same.

As we enter these uncomfortable situations in the coming weeks, know that we can never become perfect here on this earth so therefore there will always be a level of uncomfortableness and weirdness involved. Until we get to heaven, we will always experience this. As we work together with God and his Word as our rallying cry, these meetings will become less and less uncomfortable. We will connect with each other better in these new environments, we will grow better in these new environments, and then we will reach out better to invite others into these new environments and ultimately a glorifying relationship with Christ himself.

I can't wait to connect, grow, and reach (and work through uncomfortableness) together with you.

Until then and with much love,

Nate

OUR RECORD OF GIVING

Budget Goals – June (inc. 5/31)	30,499.65
Budget Receipts – June	27,685.00
Budget Goals – YTD	268,396.92
Budget Receipts – YTD	279,931.76
Budget Variance	+ 11,534.84
<i>Special Offerings</i>	
Building Fund	1,865.00



Schedule

6:30 pm - **Devotion:** broadcast over loudspeakers and via FM transmitter.

6:45 pm - **Picnic Dinner/ Hang Out Time:** In keeping with social distancing guidelines, please arrive with a meal for you family to eat. This can be a takeout meal from a local restaurant, or a meal cooked yourself and brought from home.

7:15 pm - **Group Game**

Guidelines

1. Masks are appreciated but not required.
2. Please follow parking lot volunteers' instructions when arriving. We will park in a circle to where we all can see each other but also stay separated enough to where one can exit their vehicle safely.
3. Please bring enough food to feed your family only. Please do not share food or drink between families.
4. During the hour we meet, please stay in, around or near your vehicle only. During game time, those who wish to participate will possibly need to exit vehicle. When this occurs, or if you get out at another time, stay within 6 feet of your vehicle.
5. During game time, please direct your attention to the instructions being given even if you are not playing the game. Having everyone aware will allow for no confusion and a safe game.
6. Restrooms inside the building will not be open for use during the drive-in. This is to free up volunteers by not having to clean it each time it is utilized.

Regathering Guidelines

We are as excited as can be to be able to gather together once again for worship. But, the threat of COVID-19 is still very real and very serious. With this in mind, we are going to ask everyone who feels comfortable joining us in the building for worship starting this Sunday to abide by these guidelines.

- There will be two services: 8:30 and 11:00 AM.
- The earlier service is generally for those in a higher risk group, the later for everyone else.
- We ask that you please plan on wearing a mask. We will have masks available for those who need them upon arrival.
- We will also have hand sanitizer available for each family joining us. This will be your family's personal bottle for the morning. Leave it on your seat when the service is over.
- Both doors will be available to enter, but please don't stop to visit as you enter. Instead, please make your way to your seat.
- There will not be greeters or bulletins, and offering plates will not be passed. Instead, announcements will be on the screen and offering buckets will be available by the entrance/exits.
- There will be no childcare or Children's Church, but the services will be planned with our youngest attendees in mind.
- Services will not last longer than 45 minutes.
- There will be no congregational singing, but we will explore more ways to worship the Lord together.
- At the conclusion of the service, please exit to the parking lot promptly.
- Most importantly, remember that the person next to you may not be as comfortable with contact as you are. Please respect that and maintain safely physical distancing at all times.

All of this will make our worship gatherings feel just a bit different than what was normal just four months ago. But, God created us to be a people with whom anyone can connect to grow in Christ and reach out for His kingdom. Given the realities of our world right now, these steps will allow us to be fully who God created us to be for the season we are in. Seasons change, but our God and our mission do not. Let us be intentional together in our efforts to love one another and advance the Gospel!



Elementary Student Small Group Nights (Fellowship Hall)

Dates and Times

July 12 - 5:30-6:30 p.m.
 July 26 - 5:30-6:30 p.m.
 August 9 - 5:30-6:30 p.m.
 August 23 - 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Schedule

5:30 p.m. – Dinner
 5:50 p.m. – Lesson
 6:10 p.m. – Crafts and Games
 6:30 p.m. – Dismiss

Guidelines

1. Tables and chairs will be set up and assigned for each student to sit at during the small group night. Students will not be allowed to enter another student's assigned space.
2. To best prepare for each night, we are asking all parents to RSVP their student to each night. This will allow for planning regarding safety, sanitation, and supplies. Calls will be sent out each week and forms created on the church website and FB page to RSVP.
3. Parents are more than welcome to remain present for the duration of the event. We request however, that parents practice social distancing of remaining 6 ft apart from those not a part of their immediate family.
4. Additional guidelines for student conduct while at the event will be given in person once students arrive.

Middle & High Student Small Group Nights (Fellowship Hall)

Dates and Times

July 5 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. (Middle School)	7:00-8:00 p.m. (High School)
July 19 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. (Middle School)	7:00-8:00 p.m. (High School)
August 2 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. (Middle School)	7:00-8:00 p.m. (High School)
August 16 - 5:30-6:30 p.m. (Middle School)	

Guidelines

1. Tables and chairs will be set up and provided for each student to sit at during the small group night. To achieve social distancing, only the student who is sitting at a table and chair will be allowed near or in that space. Exceptions are for members of the same household.
2. To best prepare for each night, we are asking all students to RSVP each night. This will allow for planning regarding safety, sanitation, and supplies. Calls will be sent out and forms created on the church website and FB page to RSVP.
3. Additional guidelines for student tables and chairs will be set up and assigned for each student to sit at during the small group night. Students will not be allowed to enter another student's assigned space.

- July**
- 1 **Doug Burgess**
Jeff Ross
 - 2 **Brennan Broadway**
Tracy Lowder
 - 3 **Jim Cameron**
Bonnie Lee
Cade Turner
 - 7 **Jenny Mabry**
 - 11 **Sonya Young**
 - 12 **Nick Barringer**
Emerie Smith
 - 13 **Joe Huneycutt**
 - 16 **Sarah Hazelwood**
Jonathan Hill
 - 17 **Dot Alsobrooks**
Dianne Hudson
 - 20 **Meya Kippes**
Mickey Robinson
 - 21 **Essa Mabry**
 - 22 **Braden Smith**
 - 24 **Carrie Stroud**
 - 25 **Jacob Coley**
Evan Lambert
Josh Russell

- August**
- 1 **Kelli Coley**
 - 2 **T. J. Smith**

Please email or call the church office with any changes to the birthday list.

Additional Dates & Events to Remember

Sunday School Classes Each Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

(College/Career, Joy, Life, Genesis & Blessed Assurance)

Two or More Prayer Group Each Monday at 8:30 a.m. via Zoom

Weekly Bible Study via Facebook Live Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m.

Meals on a Mission – Second Saturday Each Month