

FIRST BAPTIST NEWS

APRIL, 2020



First Baptist Church

WHILE WE WAIT, LET US PRAY

The tulips are blooming in front of the church, flowers popping up everywhere. Our grounds are lovely, and each day I walk them like my own secret garden. I know that everyone misses it, and I sure miss seeing all of you. As we enter into the season that follows Easter, we journey with the disciples of old, charting new courses. Only a few times in the history of the church have congregations worldwide found themselves in a place to grow and adapt in such ways.

The first disciples faced similar and far more difficult paths. They had to navigate a changed world, find ways to share God's love with people from vastly foreign cultures. The rules that existed before the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus no longer worked. Everything had changed.

We can take courage that God guided them those many centuries ago, and God guides us still. We also face a world that will be changed from where it was before. Sure, not everything will change; much of what we love still remains. But there will be some things that shift, adapt, and morph. We, as a community of Christ-followers, have the awesome calling to help people through this change into a changed world.

I do not know what all the needs in our community will be when the quarantine is lifted, but I am praying about it right now. I'm thinking about it, asking God for blessing and direction. And I ask that you join me in that prayer. Ask God to show us the ways we can best serve our community, best support the mission of the gospel, and best be the living-love of God to everyone we encounter. And together, as we all pray as one, I believe that God will show us the way.

I so look forward to seeing all your faces, to singing together in praise to our God, to praying together, and sharing communion with one another. That day will come soon. Until then keep safe. Keep praying and caring for one another. Remember that our God is the God of all comfort, the God of all healing, and the God of all hope!

Serving Together,
Dr. Rob Collins
Pastor

Contact Us:

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MISSIONARY UPDATES

When it became apparent that COVID19 was going to drastically impact lives worldwide, we reached out to the missionaries supported by First Baptist Church for updates as to their well-being and the impact on their work. Here's some of what they shared:

KRISTY ENGEL—TRAVELS FROM THE US TO MULTIPLE COUNTRIES.

I am very sure that your life looks different than it did when you received my last update in January of this year. Although many of us were aware of SARS-CoV-2 (then known as novel coronavirus), most of the world, outside of China, didn't know how drastically life would change.

First, let me say that I am fine and in my own home. Since returning from the 2-month Discovery trip (called Hands Around the World), I have had all of my spring travel cancelled for various reasons. Most was due to natural disasters although the most recent travel itineraries have been cancelled due to COVID-19.

Since I am unable to travel, my work has changed to completely online. This means that my support of ministries around the world happens on Zoom, WhatsApp, Messenger and through emails or phone calls. I have been helping to advise our partners and my colleagues around the world. And, very soon, I will hold a webinar to answer questions for supporters and colleagues, alike.

TIM & KATHY RICE—DR CONGO

We returned home to the United States on March 21, just as all the airports and countries were closing. This was a normally scheduled return home, but it became complicated by the COVID activities. We are now in St. Louis, staying with our daughter Susan. Tim will be working for at least two weeks at Cardinal Glennon pediatric hospital in April, as scheduled.

Every day Tim is in contact with the leadership of the Vanga hospital, giving information and guidance about how best to protect our village and hospital from the spread of coronavirus. In other news, the government mandated that schools be closed, so the nursing school and the preschool which Kathy directs and teaches are no longer in session. Like here, these closures provide economic challenges for our institutions and our workers.

We don't know when we will be able to return to Vanga. So far there have not been any Covid cases at our hospital, though there have been 161 cases reported in the DR Congo. I don't know if we are just farther behind on the epidemic timeline or if we will be spared because of the poor transportation and movement available in the country. In any case, we are praying that God's will be done. Please join us in praying for Congo and Vanga in particular.

LARRY & BECKY STANTON—SERBIA & HUNGARY

Just a little over a week ago, we were settled in to a time of self-containment in Téglás Hungary. The children and I had begun our online lessons. Hungary had closed its borders with Serbia, so Larry wasn't able to travel for his ministry. We committed to pray and listen to the Lord's leading.

As the news kept coming and changing, we felt the Lord nudging us. First, a memo from the State Department recommended that Americans living abroad consider returning. That same morning a message from International Ministries asked us to assess our situation: what was our access to health care; who would care for our children if we became ill? After much prayer and discussion, and contacting our Hungarian partners and International Ministries, we decided to return to the States until August.

I will continue posting lessons online for our school. When our 14-day post-travel isolation days are up, Larry will begin volunteering in our community. As travel bans lift and churches reopen, we will visit churches. In the meantime we will wait, with the world, to see the good God is doing through this difficult time.

Please pray for our school and my colleagues as I learn new techniques for teaching. Pray for my students and those who don't yet have the hope of Christ's love and promise that He is working all things together for their good. Please pray that they listen to His call. Please pray for the churches Larry ministers to in Serbia and the refugees impossibly stuck and forgotten by the world in this COVID crisis.

Thank you so much for your prayers and messages of encouragement. We participated in a group chat with an ABMen's group from FBC Highland, Illinois, and we would love to reach out to your congregations. Please let us know how we can connect with you as we all wait for this storm to pass over!

**JAE STOCKTON—BAJA BAPTIST SEMINARY IN MEXICALI,
BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO**

I got home from my last travel Thursday evening, March 19th. Because I came from Washington State, where COVID-19 has spread, to protect my family, I put myself in quarantine for 14 days. So far, I am feeling well. Thank God. And thank you for your prayers. I am home... and safe!

I am so grateful for the opportunity I was given to share my ministry and my calling at Church on the Rock and with a few groups at Oak Harbor – Whidbey Island in Washington State. While I was at Whidbey Island, the issue with the COVID-19 worsened. As a result, a few of my scheduled speaking engagements were cancelled. But God is good because when one door closes, another door opens. Without a scheduled plan, I was invited to share at Oak Harbor Christian Fellowship Church, a Filipino Congregation. I was really blessed with my time at Whidbey Island, a truly beautiful place. I pray that my time there was an open door for ministry partnership.

I cancelled a few scheduled trips because everything was shut down. Doing this deputation, I need to be speaking to people in order to share my ministry and my calling. I want to invite people to step up to the calling with me, to journey with me, so that we can all serve together in the mission we are all called to do. What I'm doing is not a one-man mission (Matthew 28:18-20, "Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'") Unfortunately, with this crisis we're in, I am restricted in what I can do, just like everyone else.

However, God keeps the joy in my heart, and He reminds me of the plan He has for me. I am eager to share this mission, which assists in training students and guides Christian leaders so that they can also train others to share the Word of God and His love to those who do not know Christ. I get so excited whenever I can share my own life story. I can bring hope in Christ to people that needed hope. But it's all right, God's got it! I trust that in the midst of all the chaos and uncertainty, God's got it. He is bigger than this COVID-19.

TAKU & KATIE LONGKUMER—INDIA

Greetings from India! So glad to hear from you. We pray you and all at FBC Peoria are doing well. We are all still in quarantine. But that's no big deal because now all of India is shut down for 21 days! A population of 1.3 billion – more than 4 times the US population – has been ordered to stay at home. All international flights to India had been banned earlier in the week and now all domestic flights are also grounded, as well as all passenger trains throughout the nation. Local police are strictly enforcing the shut down, ticketing vehicular traffic and fining any businesses not exempted. The virus has not yet manifest in a major way yet here, but of course there is extremely limited testing so there is not yet a clear picture of the number of affected.

We are scheduled for our 1-year home assignment to begin in July this year, but it seems unlikely that we'll be able to travel by then. We are looking forward to seeing you whenever the path opens for our return, hopefully by late summer or fall. 'Till then, we do continue to uphold you in prayer. May God keep you all in His perfect care, protection, health and peace.

For more information on the missionaries supported by First Baptist Church, please visit www.internationalministries.org.

PRAYER CONCERNS

Tom Maulding	Char Austin	Helen Nicol
Sharon Stanard	Rose Kimpling	Mark Stanard
Jim Ashton	Rosemary Walk	Mary Hinch
Jerry Edwards	Alyssa Russell	John Hart
Jacquelyn Kellogg	Deb Houser	Traci Nielsen
Leon Vickerman	Karen Vickerman	
Don Middleton (Rev. Middleton's son)		

CONDOLENCES

We extend our sympathy to John & Karen Dainty on the death of Karen's father on February 18th. His service was on Saturday, Feb 29th in Rhode Island.

THANK YOU

The family of Patricia Ann Lang wishes to acknowledge your kindness and compassion. Your expression of sympathy will always be remembered and appreciated. We want to say thank you to all who have contacted us with support, sent cards, sent flowers, given money, and shared in Patricia's Memorial. Thank you with our deepest appreciation for your generosity and loving kindness.

Sincerely,
Henry, Norman and Family



First Baptist Church

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THE MISSION OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IS TO MINISTER TO OUR CONGREGATION, THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD, SO THAT ALL MAY EXPERIENCE THE LOVE AND GRACE OF GOD.

SNAPSHOTS FROM THE BOOK OF ACTS

Taught by Rev. Jim Middleton

New Class
Coming Soon
Stay tuned!

11:15AM SUNDAY MORNINGS

RUMMAGE SALE

Our annual spring rummage sale—usually held in April—will be a summer rummage sale this year. We will let you know as soon as we are able to set a date.

In the meantime, if you are taking advantage of the extended time at home to do some spring cleaning, we encourage you to bring your cast-offs to the church for the rummage sale. Just call the church office to arrange for access to the church and classrooms where you can leave your donations.