



Newsletter of Fruitland Baptist Church

Craig Stepp, Senior Pastor  
William C. Hardin, Associate Pastor

## Pastor's Perspective

Dear Fruitland Family,

As I write to you, so much has changed and will continue to change over the next weeks. Adapting to this style of ministry has definitely stretched us and brought us out of our comfort zone. However, I go back to David Platt's book, Something Needs To Change, and maybe God is using the COVID-19 virus to make the needed changes in me that help me gain perspective of what's important. I've learned that it is easy to get overwhelmed when you stop and think about everything that is going on in the world. It takes effort to stay focused and positive in order to make an impact in the community around us.

Working through the Scripture in 1 Peter Chapter 3 and the beginning of Chapter 4 has been a reminder to me that this has not caught God off guard. It's important for us to remember that. In this period of life, which will eventually be in our rearview mirror, we have a choice to make. Are we going to sit back and let this opportunity pass us by or are we going to thrive in this opportunity given to us for the Kingdom of God? After reading the book Something Needs To Change and currently going through the book of 1 Peter, it is my hope that each one of us through these studies would choose to thrive during this period.

My focus in this newsletter is going to be different from previous newsletters. I want to take this opportunity to let you know that the staff along with other leadership are working hard to create ways to communicate effectively with you. The most popular

way that you have seen thus far is through our social media Facebook page. Other ways are through our website and Linda Bradley's emails that she is kind enough to send throughout the week.

I have learned that some people do not have the ability to watch the videos on social media. Also, some people do not have computers to receive emails or to look at the church website. We are currently looking at the best way to communicate and minister to those folks within the restrictions that have been placed before us.

Fruitland, I need your help. If you are currently reading this newsletter and you know of someone who falls in this category (is unable to receive communication via computer), would you please pause sometime during the day and make a phone call to check on your brother or sister in Christ? If there is a need that you feel that you cannot meet, please reach out to us (staff or deacons) and we will do our best to meet the needs as they arise. This is an ever-changing way to do ministry, so please extend grace and patience as we continue to navigate ministry in this way in the weeks to come.

May God Bless You!

Written in love,  
Pastor Craig

## Coronavirus Response

"And who knows whether you have not come to the Kingdom for such a time as this?" These are words spoken to Esther as she found herself in a situation she was probably not equipped or prepared for.

Over the last few weeks, we have all found ourselves in a situation where we feel ill equipped and definitely unprepared. Yet, as Esther realized, and we will too: God is always with us! This comforting reality is what helps us not only to move forward, but to step up to the task at hand. In our attempt to do so, we as a staff and leadership are implementing a four phase approach to handling this crisis adopted from Ed Stetzer's recent article in Christianity Today. We hope by sharing this it will give you all a little insight to how our leadership is approaching this season of ministry.

### *From: This Is Not The Crisis, But It Is Just A Few Weeks Away*

*By Ed Stetzer with Josh Laxton*

#### **Phase 1: Pause and Innovate**

We are actually in this phase right now. Over the last week and a half, there's been a barrage of information regarding COVID-19. As a result, our national and state leaders--through the advice of health and medical professionals--have constantly updated the public on measures they are taking and that we can take to help "flatten the curve."

The significant move taken to flatten the curve hasn't been the recommendation of "social distancing" but of public gatherings. This recommendation has disrupted in-person education, sporting events, recitals, bars and restaurants, and corporate worship gatherings. As of the time of this writing, President Trump has recommended the cancelation of gatherings of 10 or more. In addition, governors like Governor Pritzker (of Illinois) has issued a "shelter in place" order for their states.

These recommendations should be and have been (for the most part) taken seriously in the faith community (although there are outliers that continue to meet in almost prideful defiance). As such, church leaders have had to pause, pivot, and innovate in ways that are different than their normal patterns. For example, many church leaders are learning how to do "online" ministry for the very first time.

In this phase, with all the changes, recommendations, and cancellations, churches must hit the pause button on what they are doing and start making lists of what changes and innovations have to be made immediately. I've heard of one church in the Chicagoland area using their project

management software ([monday.com](http://monday.com)) to create a running list of ways they can innovate during the coronavirus.

#### **Phase 2: Prepare and Plan**

According to many medical experts, and unless something changes, the United States is about 2–3 weeks from what we are seeing in Italy. In other words, the coronavirus wave has just begun. With more testing becoming available, experts expect we will see a significant rise in those infected by the virus as well as deaths from the virus.

Here at the Billy Graham Center, our normal activity has ceased. We are now taking things on a month-by-month basis. In other words, we are preparing for what is being projected by canceling all of our April in-person meetings and moving our staff to working remotely. In a few weeks, we will be assessing our May calendar in light of the national and state recommendations and planning accordingly.

For church leaders, it's important that you begin making a list of how you and your church will be prepared for the eye of the crisis. For instance, if you live in an area that experiences hurricanes, and the meteorologist tells you when you can expect the eye of the storm to come upon you, you begin making preparations to your house in an effort to weather the storm.

Same principle applies here. The eye of the coronavirus is coming. Given the nature of this virus, it is impossible to predict when the eye will hit and how long it will endure.

In light of what is coming, church leaders will need to make preparations for how they will:

- Maximize communication to staff, leadership bodies, and congregants
- Pivot staff roles and responsibilities
- Plan for generosity (and giving)
- Follow up with online visitors and new believers
- Weather a financial crunch
- Care for their neighbors
- Serve the sick, hurting, and shut-ins
- Conduct counseling to those with mental illness, addictions, etc.
- Launch virtual small groups
- Minister to families (including children and students)

- Love their community and city well
- Seek the peace and prosperity of their community and city

### Phase 3: Engage and Execute

Phase 3 is all about execution, management, and flexibility. Think of it this way, preparation is the vision whereas engagement is the execution. You can prepare all day long and have an incredible vision for how you will lead your people through the crisis. But if you don't do the hard work of execution, you will notice it when the eye of the crisis hits.

There are four elements to engage and execute. They are, communication, delegation, management, and flexibility.

First, you need to have effective communication between all parties. In the case of churches, there needs to be solid communication between the staff and leadership bodies where everyone is on the same page with regards to the plan. In addition, there needs to be solid channels of communication to the larger church body regarding the plan.

Second, delegation is also a major key in the engage phase. A time of crisis is a time where all hands should be on deck. It's easy for many main leaders to do all the work while other leaders sit in pause. In a crisis, leaders cannot allow people to live in pause, but rather must mobilize them to engage in the mission. With that said, their engagement in crisis might be different than their engagement in calm.

Third, you will need to implement a management system. Once you effectively communicate and delegate responsibilities for what you prepared and planned for, you will need to have good oversight to make things get done.

Last, and this cannot be overstated, you and your whole team will need to be flexible. You'll have to be more flexible than Gumby. Why? Because what may be true (or work) today will not be true or work tomorrow. For instance, in a period of three days the recommendation of public gatherings went from 250, to 50, to less than 10. Even now, for a few states (and it will continue to trickle to other states), there is a "shelter in place" announcement for residents.

In short, leaders must be able to manage the whirlwind of crisis by being flexible. Let the

following maxim guide your team in times of crisis: Blessed are the flexible for they shall not be broken.

### Phase 4: Recover and Reemerge

Not all churches will survive this crisis. No, I'm not a pessimist. I'm a realist. We saw this in Katrina. That's simply the reality of the effects of this kind of crisis. However, most will recover and reemerge.

How they reemerge will depend upon circumstances out of our control, but also largely on how leaders navigate this time of crisis. My prayer for every church in every place would be for them to rise up "for such a time as this" by sharing and showing the love of Christ. That they would love well—both Christians and non-Christians alike. That pastors and church leaders would lead well. That they would lead with gentleness, wisdom, discernment, and integrity. That they wouldn't lead with a haughty or prideful spirit as if they know it all; or [even] a rebellious spirit towards the recommendations given to U.S. citizens in this national crisis.

As I wrote in USA Today last week, my hope and prayer would be that we would be like the Christians Eusebius described from the 4th century. My prayer is that once this crisis has subsided (and it will), they will say of us (as Eusebius said of them), the Christians "deeds were on everyone's lips, and they glorified the god of the Christians."

*Ed Stetzer is executive director of the Billy Graham Center, serves as a dean at Wheaton College, and publishes church leadership resources through Mission Group. Josh Laxton contributed to this article.*

### Missions Emphasis For April

*Annie Armstrong Easter Offering*

### Please Welcome New Members

Andrea Corn  
 Jeffrey Corn  
 Joe Corn  
 Isaac Dermid  
 Isaac Dermid II  
 Ashlynn Fortin  
 Carolyn Sisk



# APRIL 2020

# FRUITLAND BAPTIST CHURCH

SUN

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

							01	02	03	04	
							<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> CHRIS FORTIN SHELBY JUSTUS ADDISON REUTZEL -RIGHTNOW MEDIA BIBLE STUDY: "JUDGES" BY J.D. GREAR -CHILDREN IN ACTION VIRTUAL STUDY</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> DAVID GRESOCK CATHY LAU</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> REESE SMITH</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> JOE SHOOK</p>	
05	06	07	08	09	10	11					
<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> CURTIS HOLBERT J.D. MARKLAND -ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL: CHILDREN MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL ADULTS -ONLINE WORSHIP GATHERING <b>PALM SUNDAY</b></p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> DANIEL DALTON CLARENCE LAUGHTER TATUM STEPP</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> ANDREA CORN COLTON PITTILLO</p>	<p>-RIGHTNOW MEDIA BIBLE STUDY: "JUDGES" BY J.D. GREAR -CHILDREN IN ACTION VIRTUAL STUDY</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> EDIE HICKS  <b>MAUNDY THURSDAY</b></p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> JUDY CATHEY STEFANIE SIGMON  <b>GOOD FRIDAY</b></p>						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18					
<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> BRYNLEE BRIGMAN SALLY JAHR WALKER MAINS -WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b></p>		<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> APRIL GRIFFIS GRACE HARRELL JUDY MERRELL</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> TYTAN BANE RANEE STEPP -RIGHTNOW MEDIA BIBLE STUDY: "JUDGES" BY J.D. GREAR -CHILDREN IN ACTION VIRTUAL STUDY</p>		<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> ANNAH KICKLIGHTER</p>						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25					
<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> AUBRI TRANTHAM -ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL: CHILDREN MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL ADULTS -ONLINE WORSHIP GATHERING</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> LEILAH MEYER BAILEY SPRUDE</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> SARA SMITH</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> THERESA BALL BILLY ODOM -RIGHTNOW MEDIA BIBLE STUDY: "JUDGES" BY J.D. GREAR -CHILDREN IN ACTION VIRTUAL STUDY</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> EDIE HICKS</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> AMY HORNE SCOTT SINGLETARY CAROLYN WARD</p>						
26	27	28	29	30			<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> <p>ALL WORSHIP &amp; BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES WILL BE OFFERED ONLINE THIS MONTH THROUGH THE FRUITLAND BAPTIST CHURCH FACEBOOK PAGE. SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIAL FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS &amp; HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN BE FOUND ON THEIR YOUTH MINISTRY FACEBOOK PAGE.</p> </div>				
<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> EVAN FORTIN MERLE PITTILLO -ONLINE SUNDAY SCHOOL: CHILDREN MIDDLE SCHOOL HIGH SCHOOL ADULTS -ONLINE WORSHIP GATHERING</p>		<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> NELLIE THOMAS</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> THERESA BALL BILLY ODOM -RIGHTNOW MEDIA BIBLE STUDY: "JUDGES" BY J.D. GREAR -CHILDREN IN ACTION VIRTUAL STUDY</p>	<p><u>BIRTHDAYS</u> MICHAEL SPERRUGGIA</p>							

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April 2020

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



### 3 Ways to Give

1. From your smartphone, text the word "Give" to 828-705-3530 and follow the instructions.
2. From our website, click the "Give" tab and follow the instructions.
3. Mail check to:  
Fruitland Baptist Church  
150 College Street  
Hendersonville, NC 28792

2 Corinthians 9:7 (NIV) says, *"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

### We Need Your Help Please!

If you are not receiving the emails from Linda Bradley, or the Newsletter by email, or you are not on Facebook or Right Now Media, please leave a

message on the church phone at 828-685-8990 so we are able to correspond with you and keep you informed throughout this ever-changing situation.

In your message, please give us all of your contact information including your phone number, address, and email address if applicable. If you want to join our Right Now Media group (which gives you access to an incredible online library of biblical teaching and videos for all ages), please let us know that in your message as well.

Also, if you know someone who may fit this description and would like to be included in any or all of our avenues of communication, please reach out to them and have them contact the church or reach out to the church directly on their behalf.

Our wish is to be able to send all relevant information to everyone in our family here at Fruitland. Thank you so much for your help!