



Newsletter of Fruitland Baptist Church

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

Pastor's Perspective

Dear Fruitland Family,

Let's start by fast forwarding to May 2021. Many of us will have gone through life experiences due to our current lifestyle change and will have come out on the other side finding those experiences to be in our rearview mirror. I'm not the one who is going to try and figure out what I see in that rearview mirror. However, there is one thing I can write in confidence that many of you know and believe. As followers of Jesus Christ and believers in His Word, we rest assured that God will see us through not only this lifestyle change but He will see us through all of life's trials and difficulties that we will face. Not only will He see us through it, but He will be glorified in it and make us stronger as we navigate through it, teaching us that He truly is the founder and perfecter of our faith.

"...let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." (Hebrews 12:1b-3)

Now I would like to speak to you in real time about what we have been going through over the last couple of months. My goal in this newsletter is not to speak to the COVID -19 directly. It is to speak to you about the stages in which I have gone through personally and also what I have watched others go

through in regard to the way we have handled life during this time. I have learned that there are four stages of dealing with this pandemic that we have gone through thus far, and I would like to share these four stages with you now:

1. The Shock Factor – Each of us have watched this unfold and have had a hard time believing what we were watching and experiencing. At the beginning, the information that we received changed daily, leaving us with a lot of uncertainty, which brings me to the next stage.
2. Fear – This stage is widespread – the fear of COVID-19 and how it's going to affect each of us personally and our families; the fear of what information is truthful; and one of the most heartbreaking is hearing of all those affected by this pandemic and the affects that it has had on health, faith, and the economy. We have been forced to absorb all of this information and make decisions and have a full understanding of its effects, which brings me to the third stage.
3. Grief – In general, I have learned in ministry that people handle loss, situations, and life experiences in different ways. This stage for me was probably the hardest to overcome. As pastor, I miss my church family and our weekly meetings on both large and small scale. Unfortunately, this stage for me came around our Easter celebration. I wonder how many of you were going through the same stage at the same time? Which brings me to the next stage...

4. Frustration – Looking back on the week before Easter and Easter weekend, I found myself (I am sure along with many of you) to be frustrated and not only in a low point in life, but also my relationship with the Lord was and somewhat still is suffering. Now I would like to preface that by giving a reason. I have learned the importance of relationships with fellow believers and being together with each other. However, those relationships shouldn't replace the most important relationship I have which is with Jesus Christ.

I would like to leave you with this thought... Let us not take for granted the relationships that we have with our friends and family but also our church family. Throughout this pandemic, I have spoken with many people within our church family. They have expressed to me how much they miss gathering corporately for worship and the small groups they were involved in. I echo their sentiments and long for the day that we can meet together again as a church family. I'm going to steal a quote from our former pastor, Mike Smith. He used to say often, "Let's keep the main thing the main thing." In this case, the main thing is building on and strengthening our relationship with the Lord. We have a choice to make – "God, grow me during this time of uncertainty" or "God, I'm over it and I don't want any more to do with this." I understand this is not an either/or situation. We can have the latter attitude but God still grow us. Overall, I desire for Fruitland's attitude to be "God, grow me." Understand that the list of stages above is not a complete list because we do not yet find ourselves at the end of this pandemic. So... as you navigate the next stages, allow God to be glorified in each one.

"so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thessalonians 1:12)

May God Bless You!
Written in love,
Pastor Craig

Missions Emphasis For May
Africa Mission Trip

Join Us For Worship!

We would like to invite you to worship online with us! Fruitland Baptist Church now has a YouTube channel which you can find at :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIZ68WLaxoDySFRjeekxC3A>

For our Sunday Worship, Pastor William is making videos of Pastor Craig preaching as well as worship music videos. He is also making Sunday School videos with A.J. teaching the adults, Shane teaching the high schoolers, and Austin teaching the middle schoolers. Also, Candi is making videos teaching the children. If you have missed any of the lessons or sermons, you can go back and view whatever you have missed.

For our Wednesday night Bible Study, we are doing an online Right Now Media Bible Study called "The Book of Judges" by J.D. Greear. We will be doing Episodes 8 through 11 during the month of May, and it is easy for you to catch up on any previous episodes you may have missed. Pastor William is doing Instagram Live with the students every Wednesday at 3:00 PM. Candi has been making videos for the children through April but will start using Zoom for the Children In Action classes starting May 6th. Parents be looking for a link to join via text.

Please check the Fruitland Baptist YouTube channel to see all videos as soon as they post. They can also be found on the Fruitland Baptist Facebook page and the Fruitland Baptist Youth Ministry Facebook page.

Right Now Media

If you do not have a Right Now Media account and would like one, please send us an email message at fruitlandbaptist@bellsouth.net to let us know your email address. You can also call the Church Office at 685-8990 with your email address. Right Now Media is an incredible online library of biblical teaching videos and other Christian videos for all ages. It has something for everyone from nursery to grandparents and more! It is a wonderful tool to be using in times like these and is an absolutely free service provided by Fruitland just for you!

Staying Connected

If you are not receiving the emails from Linda Bradley or you are not on Facebook, please send your email address to us at fruitlandbaptist@bellsouth.net or leave a message on the church phone at 828-685-8990 so that we are able to correspond with you by email and keep you informed throughout this ever-changing situation.

If you know someone who may fit this description and would like to be included, please reach out to them and have them contact the church or reach out to the church directly on their behalf.

Also, if you know someone who does not have internet access and can not receive our email communications or view our online videos, please help us out by sharing information with them if possible. 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!

Fruitland Family Outreach

Please let Pastor Craig (674-0456), Pastor William (551-6191), or the Church Office (685-8990) know if you know of any needs or concerns.

THANK YOU from Pastor Craig to the many of you who are checking on each other, writing notes and cards, dropping off groceries and goodies for each other, and many other little things you are doing to show you care during these difficult days. Thanks for being the CHURCH! You are making him proud as your pastor and he looks forward to the day we can worship together in our sanctuary.

During this time, there are countless opportunities to help others around us. Please call and check on others. A phone call can really pick up someone's spirits and show you care. Without seeing each other face to face, at least we can hear one another via the phone. Many of you are already going above and beyond. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus!

Community Food Pantry

The Fruitland/Edneyville Community Food Pantry needs our help! Stefanie Sigmon is coordinating our effort to help our neighbors in need. The Fellowship Hall is open every Tuesday from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM for any food donations you would like to give. If you can't make it there during this time, please come by Turf Mountain Sod (3277 Chimney Rock Road) during business hours and someone will come out to

your vehicle and unload it for you. Stefanie will make our deliveries weekly. If you would rather give a money donation, please make a check out to Fruitland Baptist and in the memo put Community Food Pantry. Thank you to everyone that has given to this ministry so far! Keep up the amazing work!

Giving Opportunities

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

Ann Graham Lotz on COVID-19

COVID-19, otherwise known as the coronavirus, has created national fear in a way I have not witnessed in my lifetime. As of this writing, ball games are being canceled; theaters are shutting down; schools are closing; travel is restricted, and the stock market is on a crazy, wild rollercoaster ride. It's almost as though our nation is being attacked by an invisible enemy seeking to destroy us.

While my age and recent chemotherapy put me at risk, I am more concerned about the fear the coronavirus has provoked than I am of the virus itself. We seem to be caught up in a national panic.

When Isaiah's life was shaken, he responded by looking up. As a result, he had a fresh vision of the Lord. This is the time to look up ... from our knees! Let's ask God to give us a fresh vision of Himself. Because, God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear... since He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

This is a time to pray for ourselves, our families, our nation, and all those worldwide whose lives are being devastated by the death and disruption this disease is causing. You and I need to make sure we are right with God so that we are ready to meet Him whenever the time comes. And then join me in helping someone else get right with God. Let's pull out all the stops as we tell others that it's possible to have peace in the midst of the storm and confident hope for tomorrow, claiming Jesus' promise, Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

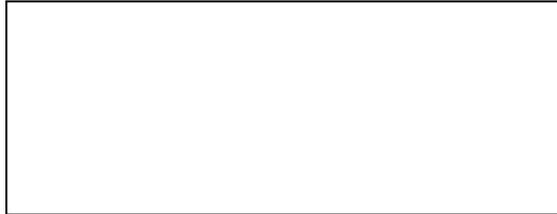
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May 2020

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Sunday, May 10th



Memorial Day
Monday, May 25th

