

Bethel
Baptist
Association

COVID-19

MAY

“Strengthening Churches in Sharing Christ”



the **BETHEL NEWSLETTER 2020**

Georgia Baptist Mission Board - Guidelines for Reopening Your Church Buildings

You must decide what is best for your congregation and community. If you have specific questions, please don't hesitate to ask, but not every answer will apply to everyone in the state based on their location. Please note that if you have any hesitancy on returning to the building, it is better to wait. There is no rush to get back to the building, although we are looking forward to that day!

As our churches reopen, we encourage you to follow and consider these guidelines.

BE INFORMED

Know the risk factors for the virus. This can help you make decisions on staffing, volunteers, and whether you will return sooner or later. For example, those with preexisting conditions and those over 65 years old are at a higher risk of experiencing worse symptoms than others if they contract the virus. **Always stay 6 feet apart!** **Deep clean your entire church. Where will germs be transferred? Consider shampooing carpets, sanitizing pews, bathrooms, doorknobs, light switches, and microphones.**

Poll your congregation on their expectations. Be in constant communication. Also know that there is no rush to return to the building. You can continue doing online services or drive-in church if your congregation is still experiencing anxiety and fear.

For complete Guidelines go to - <https://gabaptist.org/reopening-your-church-building/#prepare>

Missionary Musings



Easter 2020 was certainly a Resurrection Day to remember! For most us, it meant worshipping our Risen Lord in the isolation of our own homes as we watched our pastors proclaim the Good News of Easter over the internet by streaming video. I know for Mary and I, it was our first time to celebrate the Lord's Supper through a "virtual," online connection with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Others of you may have attended a "drive-in" service, where you stayed in your car as your church family gathered together in the parking area. Or, you may have been able to actually gather in your church sanctuary with a small group of believers maintaining proper "social distance."

However you observed this past Easter, I am certain it is one you will always remember. Our children will probably be telling their children and grandchildren about Easter Sunday, 2020, when we all "sheltered in place."

Many people across our nation and around our world will also remember this Easter for another, more important, reason. They will remember it as the day of their salvation! I am so encouraged by the stories I have heard about people hearing and responding to the Gospel message this Spring because so many churches have broadcast their services over social media platforms during the COVID-19 crisis. Praise the Lord, He really does bring forth beauty from ashes! But isn't that the theme of the Easter story, after all?

In a few days, we will be approaching the "re-opening" of our church buildings, our businesses, and our other places of activity with prayerful, cautious optimism. I just hope that everyone understands, however, that we can never return to "the way things used to be." That's because, hopefully, we have learned something over the past six weeks about protecting the most vulnerable among us, about common-sense sanitation practices, about the great potential of reaching and teaching through technology, and about what

it really means to be the "church." May we never forget the lessons of the COVID-19 crisis.

All of that being said, the deadly coronavirus is still among us here in Southwest Georgia. We know that we will have to take a measured, incremental approach to "opening back up." Because of that hard reality, our Camp Leadership and Planning Team has decided that it would be best to go ahead and **cancel our Children's Summer Camps** which we had planned to hold at Kolomoki Mounds State Park the week of June 24-27. Although we all should be experiencing a good bit more freedom of movement and activity by that final week of June, we feel that it would be too soon, given the current public health situation in our region, to safely conduct an Overnight Camp involving around 100 children and adults at that time.

Incidentally, the Georgia Baptist Mission Board has also announced that they are cancelling all their camps (Pinnacle, Kaleo, Super Wow, etc.) that had been scheduled through the month of June. For now, the events scheduled for July remain on the calendar.

This was a very difficult decision for us to make, because our Bethel Camp is always the highlight of our associational year. But we trust the Lord that there will be other opportunities to disciple our children through Christian camping experiences. Just not this Summer!

Pray for all of your associational leaders as we begin to plan and budget for next year (Oct. 2020 – Sept. 2021). I am pleased to announce that we now have a full complement of associational officers, team leaders, and committee members for the coming year. We polled all of our churches during April about the **Nominating Committee Report** (which was to have been presented at the Spring Meeting) and we received an overwhelmingly positive response to the new slate of leaders. Now, they are ready to get to work!

Finally, let me thank the Lord and thank the churches of the Bethel Baptist Association for **21 wonderful**

years that I have now served as your Associational Missionary. April 12th marked my 21st anniversary of service in this role. (Yes, it did happen to fall on Easter Sunday this year. What a blessing!)

I pray that you all stay well, and stay strong in the Lord.

Bro. James

Georgia Baptist Mission Board Evaluate Your Stress Levels

- Make an honest evaluation of how you are doing.
- Utilize your spouse/significant others as accountability.
- Be aware of behavioral changes (eating, sleep, activity).
- Monitor your physical health (make note of significant changes).
- Monitor your mental health (depression, anxiousness, anger).

Maintain spiritual disciplines

- Spend time daily in the Word and prayer.
- Participate in online worship/small groups.
- Create a blessings list.

Maintain contact with others

- Phone calls, texts, and handwritten card or letters
- Look for prayer and gospel opportunities.

Take care of your body

- Maintain a schedule for eating, sleeping, working, relaxing, and exercise.
- Monitor your diet.
- Stay hydrated.
- Exercise daily.
- Wash hands thoroughly and often.

Take care of your mind

- Take breaks from TV, reading, working, social media and news (24/7 pandemic can be upsetting and confusing).
- Make time to unwind and do things you enjoy.
- Process your feelings with others.
- Do not compare yourself to others (stress creates different reactions).
- If overwhelmed, seek help.

Chris Reynolds

Southwest Regional Consultant,
Pastor Wellness

CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY
 ♥ May 10th



BBA Children's Summer Camps (June 24-27) at Kolomoki Mounds State Park **HAVE BEEN CANCELLED** due to ongoing coronavirus concerns.



"Barnabas" Group will meet via ZOOM videoconference on Tuesday May 5th @ 11 am



Informational meeting will be Monday evening, May 18th, at 7 pm (place and format TBA)



Administrative TEAM will Meet on Thursday May 21st, 6:30 pm (place and format TBA)



Mar. 25 - Apr. 22, 2020	
Arlington	
Bethel	
Beulah	
Blakely FBC	2,404.34
Bluffton	262.29
Carnegie	
Coleman	
Colomokee	304.92
Cuthbert FBC	512.50
Damascus (E)	
Damascus (R)	174.30
Edison	89.00
Enterprise	993.79
Faith	
Fort Gaines	925.68
Georgetown	
Leary	109.88
Milford	695.00
Morgan	
Morris	
Mt. Gilead	54.38
Mt. Hebron	200.00
Mt. Vernon	219.84
New Bethel	
New Hope	74.46
New Zion	
Rehoboth	
Salem	51.76
Shellman FBC	250.00
Shiloh	833.00
Southside	225.00
Sowhattee	524.46
Springvale	
Vilulah	50.00
Individuals	
TOTAL	8,954.60
Balances Apr. 22, 2020	
General Fund	10,903.76
Designated Fund	9,600.58
New Work Fund	7,691.55



**Monday
 May 24th**

Bethel Baptist Association 124 Bay Ave. PO Box 398 Edison, GA 39846	<p><i>The Bethel Baptist Association</i></p> <p>Dr. James Holloway, Association Mission Strategist Kathy Hardwick, Ministry Assistant Joyce Jarrett, Financial Assistant</p> <p>Phone 229.835.2887 FAX 229.835.2023</p>	Presort Standard Mail (B) US Postage Paid Mailed from Zip Code 39846

May 2020

- 5 "Barnabas" Prayer - Videoconference, 11 am
- 10 Mother's Day
- 18 "Christmas Backpacks 2020" Planning - TBA, 7 pm
- 21 Administrative Team - TBA, 6:30 pm
- 25 MEMORIAL DAY (Assoc. Office Closed)



June 2020

- 22 Executive Committee - Location TBA, 7 pm

July 2020

- 4 INDEPENDENCE DAY
- 23 Missions Coordinating Committee - Assoc. Office, 6:30 pm

NOTE: All dates, times, and locations are subject to change due to the ongoing public health situation. Team members and committees should watch for direct communications from us (mail, email, and text messaging) concerning each event as it approaches.