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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
FORT THOMAS

*The Vision
Proclaiming the
good news*

May 2020



All weekly
Services have been
Canceled until further notice.

Cancellations due to
Covid-19 Pandemic

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FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
FORT THOMAS

The Vision

NEED HELP? CALL THE CHURCH
AT 859-441-8884

Greetings, church family!

As I sit in my basement writing this message to you, I admit that I am struggling to find the right words for the situation where we find ourselves. As hard as it is to believe, we are now close to two months since we were last able to gather in person for worship. As much as I hate to admit it, it appears that it will be at least another month or two before we can even entertain the thought of gathering together. Even when that day comes, we will have to take precautions that keep us from doing what for so long was considered normal.

One of my firmest convictions as a pastor and as a believer is that we are called to be faithful in following Christ in whatever moment life finds us. While perhaps it isn't what we hoped for, I want to encourage you and thank you for your willingness to adapt and to continue being the body of Christ as we work to be agents of Good News. I have heard no negativity, you have been calling to check in on each other, praying for each other, and supporting mission endeavors pursued by the church. We have learned how to temporarily be a church online and I love seeing the comments that you post during our weekly services.

While we do not know what lies ahead, we do know that God is faithful. I want to encourage you to spend extra time over this next month reflecting on your faith and how God might be working in your life to be able to serve in new ways.

And of course, we are not simply waiting and praying for the day that we are together. God is at work in the world at this very moment and we all have something that we can bring to the table. I have already mentioned several ways that you have stepped up over the past few weeks in taking care of each other and checking in on each other. I also want to thank you for your faithfulness in giving to our general offering and also to our COVID19 benevolence fund. We are able to share out of abundance with those in need. Your gifts have already gone to feed hungry international college students, provide a meal to say thank you to those cleaning hospitals, and to share green light bulbs with our community in support of those battling coronavirus. In the next few weeks we will have more opportunities to feed others as well as a special chance to partner with CBF field personnel and friend of the church, Scarlett Jasper in providing necessary supplies to impoverished folks in McCreary County, Kentucky.

Please know that the church is here for you during this time. If there is something that you need or ways we can assist you, please reach out to us. Stay safe and take care of yourself because we need you, we love you, and we care about you! The healthier we are, the better equipped we will be to go out.

On a personal note, my family misses you all. The kids have enjoyed chatting with church friends on Thursday nights. On Sundays as a few of us gather at the church to host online worship, my kids at home see adults on the screen and holler at them because they want to see them. It does my heart good to know how much our family enjoys being at church and how well they are loved. That sense of community is one that most churches might claim to have, but that I know we all feel towards each other. I look forward to a time when our whole family can gather with you in worship.

Shine on. Press on. Go on.

Pastor Jeremy



John 20:19-31

The currency of those of us who preach is words. When I had finished my senior year of college, I was invited to be the summer intern in a large church on the east coast of Florida.

I understood my job as working with the youth, doing some preaching, and shadowing a respected pastor. What I wasn't told is that he was going to take a five-week vacation.

Surprise! I was the pastor. I felt fairly comfortable with the preaching since the congregation cut me a lot of sermonic slack.

One day I had a call from a funeral director in town. "We have a family that is Baptist," the funeral director said. "They are not members of any church; their 3-week old baby has died, and we want you to lead the graveside service." That humid summer morning I stood with the parents and two sets of grandparents. I remember reading from the 23rd Psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd..." Whatever else I said I don't recall. The family stood around the tiny casket. Each of the family, I'm certain, were filled with grief. But no tears, no crying, no evidence on their face of what was happening. The only sound besides my voice was the flapping in the hot summer wind of the funeral tent that stretched over us. As I spoke, the family looked at their shoes. We all left the grave, and I returned to the apartment where I was living. That's when I first struggled with my calling as a minister. Frederick Buechner, that gifted minister and writer, says that all of us who preach have 26 letters in the English alphabet. Ministers try to craft words, but we have just 26 letters.

At the cemetery, we weren't dealing with a virus, but for the family, it felt like the world had ended, which, of course, it had in many ways for these people staring at their shoes.

I sat in the apartment that afternoon wondering if I had really been called to lead a baby's "funeral". Would I be able to cobble my 26 letters of the alphabet into some words that might be hopeful and helpful?

What I really wanted to do, and, obviously, I never could do, was to heal all of the brokenness.

John 20 is a post-Resurrection appearance of Jesus to his disciples. They were gathered in a locked room. They were afraid, as some of us are prone to be when circumstances overwhelm us. In this pandemic, it's necessary to isolate ourselves. But think of the times that we have locked the doors of our lives because we're afraid of our failings and our inadequacies and over our reluctance to use our 26 letters to spell "grace" and "forgiveness".

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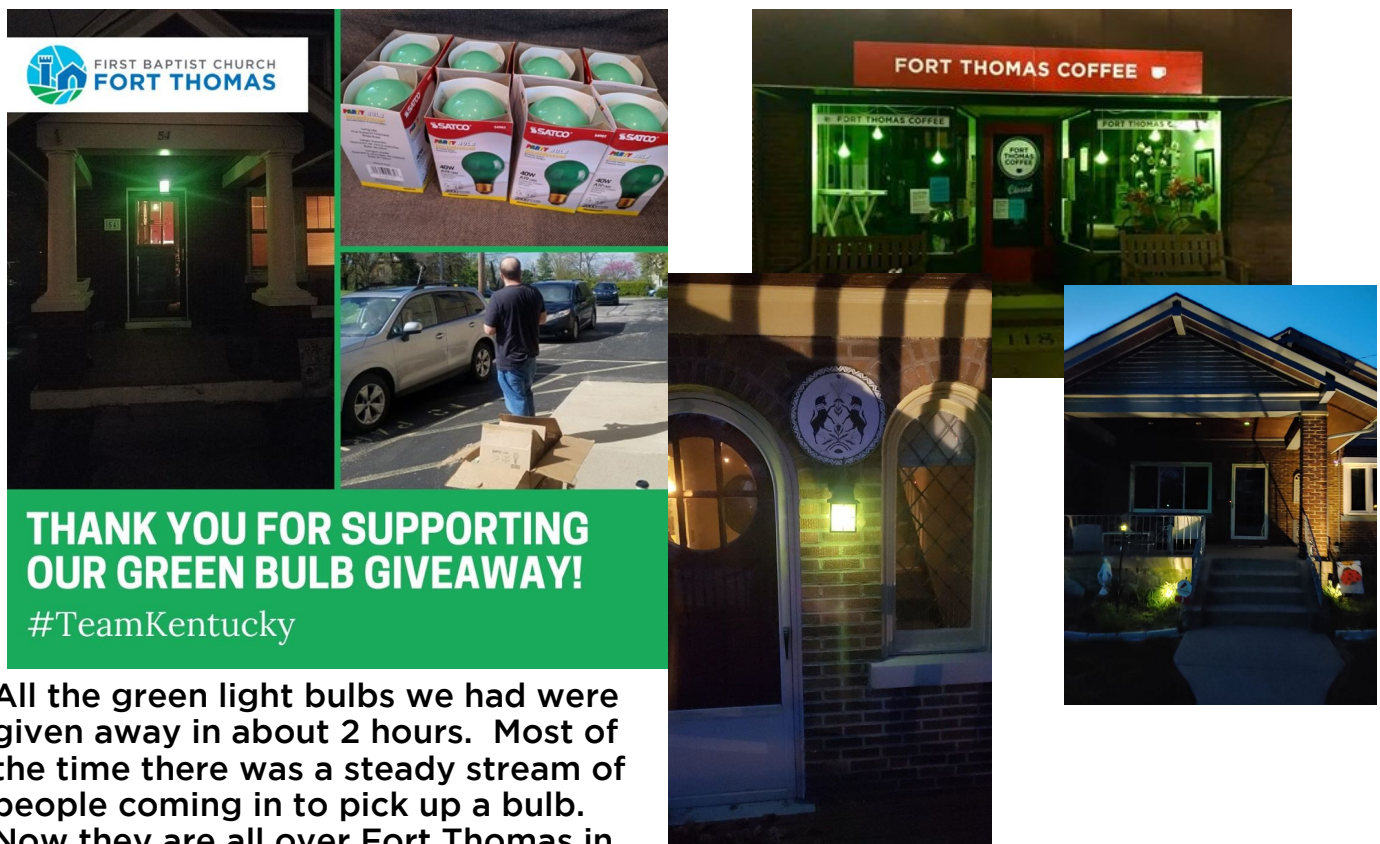
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What does Jesus do? In this time, he uses his alphabet to spell, "Peace be with you". Not once, but 3 times he uses these words, because when we're really afraid, we need to keep saying it in order to hear peace in the deepest places of our lives.

The disciples didn't instantly shed their fear. They didn't even, to our knowledge, change their outlook on things. But now they had a new word - "peace" - because Jesus was present to them.

I wish that I could make everything well for all of us. I learned that summer standing by an infant's grave, I didn't have the power to do that. I can't allay the fears of those disciples in their locked room. What I can say is this. In the midst of a crisis, Jesus is with us. "Peace be with you".

Live simply, Love generously, Care Deeply, Speak kindly, Listen reverently and respectfully, Pray daily, And then... leave the rest to God.



**THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING
OUR GREEN BULB GIVEAWAY!**

#TeamKentucky

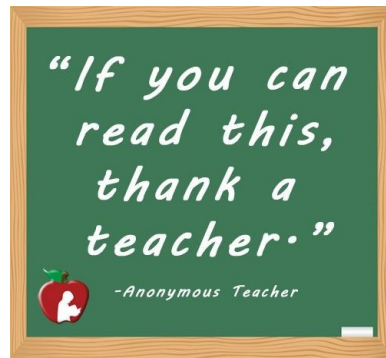
All the green light bulbs we had were given away in about 2 hours. Most of the time there was a steady stream of people coming in to pick up a bulb. Now they are all over Fort Thomas in support of those battling Covid-19.

Everyone was very appreciative of getting the green light bulbs. They are very hard to find these days.

#TeamKentucky

ATTENTION:

The church office will be closed on May 13-14 for personal days. The office will reopen at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, May 18th.



May 5th is National Teacher Day. I think during the year of Covid-19, our teachers have been asked to go above and beyond their normal duties. Let's pray for them, the students and their parents during this very difficult time in our lives. What would we do without our good teachers?



Memorial Day is May 30th. Let's all commit to pray for all our soldiers from the past, present and future. They all give so much and some give all. They deserve our prayers and our respect. May God bless each and every soldier and their families too.



At the end of the 19th century, "The Lady With the Lamp"— or as she is more widely known, Florence Nightingale — founded modern nursing. Thanks to her strict use of hand-washing and hygiene practices while caring for wounded soldiers in the Crimean War, Nightingale and her helpers reduced the death rate from 42% to 2% — ushering in nursing as we know it today. On May 6, we recognize the important role nurses play in our lives by celebrating National Nurses Day.

Nurses have always had a very important job. There have been many times in history that their job became more difficult than normal. I pray it never gets more difficult than it is right now during this Covid-19 pandemic. Please be in prayer for them and all our front line workers.

From our Worship Leader

Hello! Let me say again as I said in the April newsletter that I miss seeing each and everyone of you. I can't wait till we can be together in worship, but I think that's still going to be a little while. I pray that you are all healthy, safe, and are able to do what you need to do. Don't forget, but if you are unable to get out for groceries, etc., those of us who are able would be glad to do for you.

For those of you who were able to worship with us live on Facebook, thank you for joining us. I'm glad we can do that. It's not the same as being in person but we're still "together." We are continuing to learn new ways to use the Internet to communicate with each other. Jeremy even suggested the choir could sing together on Zoom. I thought that might be fun. So, choir, don't be surprised if you get an invitation from me to join Zoom one evening.

The flowers have been beautiful this spring, I hope that you have been able to enjoy them. I have. The beauty of God's creation is always refreshing and encouraging to me. As the weather gets a little better I hope that you can get outside and enjoy. Take care of yourself. Looking forward to seeing you soon. Love you all...

Mother's Day, May 10



Happy Mother's
Day!

Walk With Me, Mama

Walk along side me, Mama
and hold my little hand.

I have so many things to learn
that I don't yet understand

Teach me things to keep me safe
from the dangers everyday.
Show me how to do my best
at home, at school, at play.

Every child needs a gentle hand
to guide them as they grow.
So walk alongside me, Mama
We have a long way to go.

To My Other Mother

*You are the other Mother I received
the day I wed your son.
And I want to thank you, MOM,
for the loving things you've done.*

*You've given me a gracious Man,
with whom I share my life
You are his lovely Mother,
and I his lucky wife.*

*You used to pat his little head,
and now I hold his hand
You raised in love a little boy,
and then gave me the Man.*

From our Children's Minister

Hello church family,

Our children's ministry is doing a new series called Blueprints that uses construction themes to help kids map out their feelings using God's word. It teaches them to Stop and name what they're feeling, Look for what's creating the feeling, and then Listen to God's word to see what the Bible has to say about the feeling.

Our kids are greatly missing their church family and friends, and so in the month of May we're recreating our volunteer schedule so that our kiddos are receiving a weekly dose of love from our congregation. Each week for each age group there will be a children's ministry team member that reaches out to their group with a card, phone call, or word of encouragement. We don't know how long the lockdown will last or how things will look when we get back together, so we aren't sure if our new volunteering system will be for just the month of May or much longer, so if you aren't on the schedule for May but would like to be in the future, please let me know. To those who have already sent cards and mail to our church kids, thank you so much for your continued involvement in their lives. Your attention and remembrance of them is a testament to God's love. Thank you for your positive contribution to their lifelong perception of God and the church.

Blessings,

Kaitlyn Runion

Children's Minister



Happy Anniversary

5/4

Jeff & Susan Smith

5/12

Walter & Debbie Mershon

5/22

David & Lori Orne

5/31

Harry & Tina Weitkamp



5/12

Norma Jolly

5/17

Jim Scott

5/18

Jerod Guilkey

5/22

Brian Silz

THE BRIGHT SPOT

And the peace of God,
which passeth all
understanding shall
keep your hearts and
minds through
Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7



Address

With the help of Thelma, we have located an address for Jeanette Dittoe. She is staying with her daughter, Sandy, in Mason. A home has been found for her that will work with her on memory but she is not allowed to move until the pandemic has passed. The address is:

6026 Deerfield Blvd. Apt # 335
Mason, OH 45040

Now we can send cards to Jeanette to let her know that she has not been forgotten.

Your church family is here for you. If you should need anything, please give us a call at the office at 859-441-8884, and someone will show up to help you take care of your needs.

**GOD BE WITH YOU TIL WE
MEET AGAIN!**

HOW MUCH LONGER? These are the words that go through our minds so much these days? How much longer until we can get out of our house and do something fun? How much longer until we can go out to eat? How much longer until we can go to a movie? How much longer until we can go to the gym, get our hair cut or dyed? My dog's hair is a mess! How much longer? Most importantly, how much longer until we can meet together with our church family? I miss you guys so much! I miss the kids I am with each Sunday so very, very much! How much longer? I need to spend time with my granddaughters. I miss them! How much longer? Some people are wondering how much longer until they can get back to work. They have bills to pay! This is something we have never endured before. It is so different. We don't know how to process this. It is worse because we cannot put an end date to it. This is hard. What can we do? We can lean on God. **Romans 12:12** says "*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.*" Let's all pray and ask for healing of our land because with God, all things are possible.

Debbie Mershon

"A joyful heart is
good medicine"



A teacher asked her students to use the word "beans" in a sentence. "My father grows beans," said one girl. "My mother cooks beans," said a boy. A third student spoke up, "We are all human beans."



A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on." The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now." The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!" His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff & Bil Keane



"Mommy, will you write 'Happy Mother's Day' on here? But don't look at it!"



REMEMBER, IF YOU LOSE A SOCK
IN THE DRYER, IT COMES BACK
TO LIFE AS A TUPPERWARE LID
THAT DOESN'T FIT ON ANY OF
YOUR CONTAINERS