

First Christian Caller

First Christian Church, Baton Rouge

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NEXT STEPS



Dear FCCBRLA family,

I send a big thank-you to those who responded to the "Life after COVID-19" survey. Looking over the survey, we see that there is a wide spectrum of opinion, from individuals ready to reopen everything ASAP, to those who are continuing caution and isolation until a vaccine is manufactured and available.

Effective May 15, the State of Louisiana is moving into Phase 1 of reopening; however, this doesn't mean we're ready to resume pre-COVID19 operations.

The guidelines of this phase are still quite restrictive, and the bar set for protection of employees and visitors, and sanitizing procedures, is still quite high. Additionally, reading over the results of the survey, about one-quarter of respondents said they were ready to return to church on May 17, but when we look forward to June 7, the percentage rises to almost 50%. Advice coming out of many denominational leadership organizations, including the Disciples leadership, is, "Don't be in a hurry to resume full public services." To that end, we will resume public services on Sunday, June 7, and use these next few weeks to discern God's wisdom in our changed situation.

We have crossed into a new normal, and we are still discerning what this means. Many of our pre-COVID19 programs will not be workable for some time to come. Our nursery and children's programs do not fit with standards for social distancing—unfortunately, or fortunately, infants, children and toddlers do not know about or care for keeping a safe distance. We love them for that, but we also want to protect them. We will need to discern how to rear our children in the faith moving forward. Church choirs have become problematic with concerns about spreading the virus. I confess this is all very aggravating.

On the other hand, doors have been opened for new ministries. The importance of digital connection has been made clear to me. I admit that I was something of a Luddite about streaming our Sunday services online, but our shared experience with Worship at Home services, and the responses from the survey, prove that this is an important ministry for people inside and outside of the congregation. Our evening online prayers and daily email devotionals have been an important source of encouragement to many in our church family.

All that is to say we have some new and unexpected and important work to do. And I'm excited about what it means, even as I grieve what has to evolve or pass away. In the book of Acts, while on a missionary journey, Paul had his mind made up to go deeper into Asia, sharing the Gospel. One night he had a dream of a man from Macedonia waving to him, asking that Paul come and help; Paul saw that God was leading him toward Europe to share the Gospel, and Paul followed God's vision, a change of direction that affects **all of us** who have roots to the Christian church that emerged in Europe (Acts 16). May God give us an unexpected vision how and where to share the Gospel in this new chapter of unfolding history!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Chisham". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Rev. Dr. David Chisham
Senior Minister

SHARING FISH & LOAVES

Jesus then took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed to those who were seated as much as they wanted. He did the same with the fish. —John 6:11

Baton Rouge food drive - how we can help:

DONATE FOOD: Donated food items may be delivered to the Fellowship Hall east (covered) entrance weekly on Wednesdays from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Members of the Outreach Committee will provide curb-side pickup service; so you won't even have to get out of your car! Food items will be delivered to **Southeast Ministries** on a weekly basis.

Suggested donations: *Jelly, instant potatoes, Jiffy cornbread mix, mac & cheese, crackers, bags of apples, oranges, onions, or potatoes, rubbing alcohol or other anti-viral cleaning agents.*

DONATE FUNDS: Visit brfoodbank.org/bankingonbr for more information and to donate.

DONATE TIME: Visit volunteer.brfoodbank.org/calendar. Volunteers are asked to bring and wear masks when they volunteer. If you do not have a mask, please contact the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank Volunteer Coordinator at 225-359-9940.



Judy Lester and Carol Madere at a recent collection Wednesday.



From Pam Jones, Board Chair

I had previously shared with you all that the church was putting in an application under the Paycheck Protection Program for federal financial assistance available to non-profit organizations.

I am pleased to let you all know that First Christian Church was recently approved for a PPP loan. The total amount of our financial award is \$33,060 and those funds have been received as of this article.

As previously stated, our intent here is to spend the funds on qualifying expenses that can be documented and submitted to the Small Business Administration (SBA) to receive loan forgiveness after the fact. However, as there is a specific timeline involved and only certain expenses qualify, it is conceivable that the church will still owe a balance when all is said and done but we do not anticipate that being a large amount. That being said, as our funding has been impaired by the current situation for an as yet undetermined period of time, we continue to rely on the tithes and offerings of our members to remain financially stable. Thank you for being faithful givers.

I also wanted to make you aware that the board will be meeting next week to go over the results of the congregational survey and discuss with Reverend David what worship will look like when we return. To that end, we wanted to make you aware that the results of the survey have lead us to conclude that it makes more sense for us as a congregation to resume services beginning the first Sunday in June which is the seventh.

So, at this time, we will be continuing with online services and discussing with the leaders of various groups (Sunday school, Choir, etc.) the best plan of approach to resuming activities.

Many thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey and share their thoughts with us. I am very much looking forward to a time when we can all meet again in person.

Love and Peace,

Pam Jones, *Board Chair*

Reminders & Requests

- If you would like to be part of our online worship services and can take and share a phone video, [please let Rev. David know! Email him, here.](#)
- **Call your fellow church members**, especially those without online access. Email or leave a phone message for the church office if you need contact information. Thank you!
- Your Church Board is currently studying the results of our survey, in line with guidance from the governor's office and public health officials, as we plan for re-opening of our campus to worship and gatherings.



Savannah Grace Allain



Congratulations ...

... **to Cheryl and Paul Allain**, who joyously announce their entrance to the Grandparents Club with the birth of their first grandchild to son and daughter-in-law, Corey and Lisa. Savannah Grace Allain arrived on March 30, 2020, weighing 7.0 pounds and measuring 18 inches long. Savannah is also Marjorie Clark's first great-grandchild.

Their daughter and son-in-law, Chelsea and Jeremy LeMieux, are expecting in July. Prayers abound for these new and expectant families!

... **the Morgan Family** - James and Kristin, and siblings Brooke, Leonardo, and Nicolas - on the arrival of Oliver Jeremiah Morgan at 11:15 a.m. on Monday, May 4, 2020. "Ollie" weighed in at 8 lbs., 7 oz., and measured 21-3/4 inches long,

We Remember in Our Prayers...

The family of Susan Messmer in their grief. We received word that Susan had passed away on April 19, 2020

The Christiansen family in their grief.

The family of Dolly Schulz (Susan Griswold's mother) in their grief.

Change of Routine and Isolation Can Raise Concerns

A lack of structured time and routines like work, meetings, and getting the children to school may loosen boundaries around when it is okay to drink and how much one may choose to consume. We may also disconnect from the tools that help our social, spiritual, and emotional well-being, making us vulnerable to fear.



If you or someone you love needs to connect, online resources are available, especially now:

- <https://www.alcohol.org/resources/coronavirus-and-alcoholism/>
- <https://www.12step-online.com/>
- <https://al-anon.org/al-anon-meetings/electronic-meetings/>

Pastor David Chisham is also available to talk with you: 703-220-6011, or [email him](#).

LASM Now Presenting Educational & Entertaining Online Content



The Louisiana Art & Science Museum has released an online portal for at home art and science experiences at virtual-lasm.org. The portal, which is organized by grade level and includes a section for all ages, includes videos, hands-on activities, and blogs produced by the Museum and Irene W. Pennington Planetarium.

This library of art and science content is designed to not only prevent learning regress in children due to state-mandated school closures but also educate and entertain multi-generational audiences who are currently isolated.

Included are virtual versions of favorites such as Stargazing in the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium and The Traveling Trunk Show, along with newly-produced content such as Choose Your Own Venture interactive astronomy videos and We Need Our Space: LIVE. For more information, send an email to Frances Lee at flee@lasm.org.

Prayer List

The following people represent some of the current concerns at First Christian Church. If you would like to have a name added, update a current prayer request, or remove someone from the prayer list, please fill out one of the prayer cards in the attendance books and put it in the offering plate, or contact us at churchoffice@fccbrla.org, or 225-926-4175. Names will rotate off after two months without an update.

Members in our prayers:

Ann Baskin, Rita Brian, Dora & Ron Blackburn, Linda Burns-Sanders, Norma Carr, David Chisham, Jody Chrisope, Pam Culp, Lorrinda Dickinson, the Grigg family, Rich Griswold, George Gullett, Lee Gullett, Ruth Horn, Barbara Knight, Marie Ladner, Allen Lax, Helen Mitchener, Jerry Moses, Bob & Jennifer Netterville, Helen Rankin, Ruth Riddle, Gladys & Kelly Runnels, Bill Trotter, Mary Jon Turner, Travis Valenti

Friends & Family of Members in our prayers

Rev. Dwight Bailey, Donna & Don Bohlcke, Angela Maria Avansi Casarotti, the Christiansen family, Jimmie E. Dugas, Frances Durham, Johnny Durham, Paul Foster, Judy Heacock, Patty Hubeny, Ray Hutchinson, Mike Keene, Grandma Frances Krupala, Lee Lambert, Chelsey Miguez, Judy Olson, Bobby Phillips, Cherry Quin, Debbie Riddle, Dayna Coupel Simoneaux, the family of Bobby Taylor, Claudia Wagner, Broadmoor Methodist Church

Members in Active Military Service:

PVT Gage Goodspeed

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ONLINE LINKS:

Church Office Phone: 225-926-4175 Email: churchoffice@fccbrla.org

Rev. David Chisham: 703-220-6011 Email: david@fccbrla.org

Website: fccbrla.org

YouTube Video Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/FCCBRLA/featured>

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/fccbrla>

Facebook Worship at Home: <https://facebook.com/fccbrlaworshipathome>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/fccbrla>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/fccbrla>

Office Re-opening Announcement

The church office will be open at regular hours starting Monday, May 18: 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. You will notice the safety protocols in place if you come by to visit. **Public worship is scheduled to resume on Sunday June 7 (read more inside) — stay tuned for service time(s).**

We offer heartfelt thanks to those of our congregation who are giving extra as well as those who are maintaining their giving in these times. As you are able, please keep up your tithes and offerings. Our ministry continues, and our church response to needs in our area, and beyond, is likely to increase in the days ahead.

In the meantime, there are three ways to contribute to First Christian Church:

1. **Mail your check** to *First Christian Church, 8484 Old Hammond Hwy., Baton Rouge LA 70809.*
2. **Drop off your check** through the mail slot on the church office door. At least one of the staff is going by daily to check the mail and the property.
3. **Sign up for *Bill Pay***, a free service offered by just about all banks and credit unions, and they'll send a check based on your account instructions and schedule.



ALL SERVICES AND GATHERINGS AT CHURCH SUSPENDED UNTIL JUNE 7.
JOIN US ONLINE FOR WORSHIP, PRAYER AND DEVOTIONALS: fccbrla.org