

First Christian Caller

First Christian Church, Baton Rouge

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No. 11



IN THIS ISSUE

- ◇ What Have We Learned?
- ◇ Sharing Fish & Loaves
 - ◇ Returning to Church
 - ◇ Online Worship Links

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?



As excitement and anticipation builds for re-opening live worship services in our sanctuary this Sunday, I find myself reflecting on what these past months have meant. To some I know it feels like a big waste — lost lives, lost time, lost income, lost independence. The negative effects of the virus and the closures will be with us for some time to come. But even as we begin to emerge from feelings of fear and isolation, my hope would be that we have discovered untapped talents and an inner sense of courage throughout this difficult time.

I've mentioned this before — it has taken me by surprise how important the Internet has become for church communication. This is not the first time a communication technology revolution forced the hand of the church to re-envision its spiritual life. From the earliest years of Christianity, though we were called a "People of the Book," most Christians were illiterate, and the written scriptures were not widely available as they were transcribed by hand and quite expensive. Famously, Bibles were so precious they had to be chained down to a lectern to prevent theft. However, with Gutenberg's printing press in the 1500's, the spiritual life of Christians, which had centered around listening and speaking, had to adjust to the printed word as an augment to and eventually a guide to spiritual life. The revolution of the printing press helped stoke the fires of the Reformation. Now, 500 years after that great revolution of faith and culture, I find myself taken hold by another revolutionary force of communication that I had kept at arm's length.

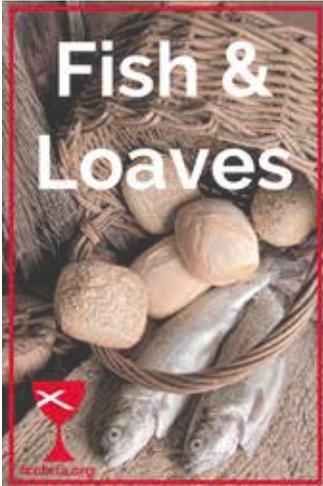
But it's not only the message delivery that has surprised me, it's also the messengers. Many have commented that they've enjoyed the diversity of people we've been able to include in our Sunday morning Worship at Home videos. What thrills me all the more is that YOU have been the creators of much of the content. YOU stood on your own spiritual legs and walked and talked to us. God's word was the gift YOU shared with all who would listen. When so many of us have been quiet about our faith person-to-person, yet we've found the courage to share our faith with almost THE ENTIRE WORLD. What I have learned is that God's word is in you, it just takes some encouragement and a good outlet to let God's word speak through you.

As we re-open the sanctuary for public worship, please know that it's going to be different for a while. Seating is re-arranged, movement will be minimized, many will be wearing masks — I'm confident that one day soon this too shall pass. But the lessons we've learned shouldn't be lost — God's word is in your heart and in your mouth. Be strong and courageous, for the Lord is on your side! Let's continue to share the Good News with all who would listen and become disciples.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Chisham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. David Chisham
Senior Minister



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

FCCBR Food Drive - how we can help:

To date we have had 13 donors donate 358 food items!

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.

Wednesday Fellowship Hall drop-off collection will continue through June 10. However, the need in our area is still great, so donated items (or funds) will be collected thereafter on Sundays, in the narthex.

DONATE FUNDS: Greater Baton Rouge Foodbank - brfoodbank.org/bankingonbr for more information and to donate.

Southeast Ministries - Checks can be made out directly to Southeast Ministries and brought to the church during food drop-off times, or mailed to 476 Sharp Road, Baton Rouge LA 70815. *Be sure to mark the memo line with "First Christian Church."*

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 GBR Food Bank Volunteer Coordinator at 225-359-9940.



Snaps of food drop-offs from Wednesday, May 20, 2020. Text, photos, and graphics provided by Judy Lester.

What Will it Be Like to Return to Church?

We will be returning to live worship in our sanctuary on Sunday, June 7, 2020, with one service each week at 10:00 a.m. The protocols outlined below are made under the recommendations of the Governor's Phase II plan, and may be adjusted according to expediency.

Should I Attend in the Sanctuary, or Not?

If you feel ill from any cause, have been running a temperature or have a cough, or have been exposed to someone diagnosed with or suspected of having COVID-19, please stay home and join us online. If you feel vulnerable to the disease if exposed, the recommendation is for you to remain at home. Through Phase II, persons over the age of 65, particularly those with any underlying, not-well-controlled medical conditions, are encouraged remain at home.

We will continue our creative online worship experience, and will interact with our online audience during our worship service — we want everyone to feel a part of our family's worship together.

Going on Behind the Scenes

We are striving to have a clean and safe environment, carefully considering issues of possible transfer of the COVID-19 virus, while mindful of emotional, spiritual, and physical health needs and considerations for all our church family.

We have tried our best to plan for many eventualities; however, given the circumstances, we know that something may go wrong. Someone may get a little too close to you. Your favorite part of the worship or something in the sanctuary may be changed. If you feel you are getting flustered or anxious or angry, take a deep breath, count to ten, or step outside of the sanctuary to get some fresh air. Enter the sanctuary when you feel emotionally and spiritually ready, or you may wish to take a few more Sundays for returning—God is with us, wherever we are, and your church will be here with and for you, wherever you are.

Arriving at Church

We ask that you chat and socialize with friends outside of the church building — in the courtyard or side yard areas of the campus. You will find all doors to the sanctuary propped open — feel free to use any entrance if you see a line forming near one door.

As you enter, pre-packaged communion kits will be available, as well as offering plates, masks, and hand sanitizer, at all entrances. It would be best if *one* person from each household collected the communion kits sufficient for their group, remembering the rule about selecting food: "You touched it, you take it!"

At each entrance and around the sanctuary you will see a “QR” code—it looks like a small black square with white dots on it. If you have a smart phone, iPad or tablet, open your camera app to photo, and aim your phone at the QR code. A pop-up window will appear and take you to a special website with a form to sign-in, make prayer requests, as well as that Sunday’s worship information and weekly announcements. If the QR code isn’t working for you, open a web browser and navigate to: fccbrla.org/sunday. If you don’t have a smart phone or device, don’t worry, as everything you’ll need will also be on the video displays in the sanctuary.

Restrooms are open, and sanitizing wipes are available in the bathrooms. Please wipe down surfaces you touch before and after use. A wastebasket will be outside each restroom door to leave any towels or wipes you used to open the restroom door.

Finding a Seat in the Sanctuary

Once in the sanctuary, please go directly to find your seat in a pew. Given our differing judgment about wearing masks within our congregation, we are designating the pews on the East side of the building (Airline Highway side/choir loft side) as seating only for those wearing masks. The pews on the West side of the building (Jefferson Hwy. side/organ pipe display side) is for those who have no preference for sitting near those wearing or not wearing a mask. Young children without masks may sit with their masked family.



WOOD = GOOD
BLUE = BAD

Whether or not you are wearing a mask, we ask that you keep at least six feet between you and other individuals not part of your household—physical distancing is *highly encouraged*. Pews have been marked to meet these distancing recommendations, and we ask that you **not sit in an area marked with blue tape or signs.** Ushers will be available to answer questions and, if you need, help find an appropriate seat.

Please note that your favorite pew may not be available for you to sit in, depending on your preference for wearing/not wearing a mask, and because we are skipping every other pew. But don't worry: the pews are bolted to the floor, and when all of this is passed your pew will still be there for you!

We have reduced or removed nonessential items to limit surfaces for contamination. This includes pew Bibles and hymnals, our sign-in tablets for members and guests, and our service bulletins and announcement sheets. Please bring your own Bible, or use the QR code to take you to our Sunday bulletin page.

Are There Changes in the Service?

So that meaningful worship experiences can be shared at home or in church, we will be adjusting our liturgy, with our time of praise and prayer followed by communion, then our message for the day from Rev. Chisham. Our liturgy will include a mix of live and pre-recorded messages and music.

Aim your smartphone's camera at our QR code available on the posters at the doors (see example below), or go to fccbrla.org/sunday in your web browser to follow along in the service in our online leaflet.

Announcements will be included in the online leaflet, and at the top of the page is our Sunday sign-in form. Let us know who all attended with you, and if all goes well, the prayer requests you've submitted will be read aloud before the Prayers of the People.

There will be no movement from the pews for Children's Sermon. They will remain with parents and following the children's sermon, children may choose to attend Children's Worship & Wonder. The Worship & Wonder three-year-old through second grade age limits will be strictly enforced.

Communion and offering will not be given or taken up with plates, so our deacons will remain in their seats. As you exit, please take your empty communion kits and dispose of them in the baskets next to each exit. You may leave your offering in the plate next to exit doors.

Dismissal and Fellowship

At the conclusion of our worship time together, we will need to depart carefully to avoid crowding exits, or each other.

Please follow the directions given at the time, which may need tweaking each week, depending on attendance, groupings, and seating. As you leave, please be sure to **take with you anything disposable that you touched**, particularly your used communion kit. We will have bagged trash bins at each exit door.

We will not be resuming Coffee Fellowship at this time. Greeting and talking with those outside your household should take place out of doors, while maintaining strict distancing guidelines.



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. Marion Denova. Lorrinda Dickinson. the Grigg family. Rich Griswold. George Gullett. Lee Gullett. Ruth Horn. Barbara Knight. Marie Ladner. Allen Lax. Elise Madere Lee. 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>

Attention Techies, or Techie-wannabes!

As we prepare to re-open our public worship, we have been given an important ministry to stay connected with those who are remaining at home:

We are opening a livestream of our worship services, and we need to recruit some new talent to help run the online production. This is a *great* opportunity for anyone interested in learning about livestream production.

To begin with, you don't need to have specialized skills, just be able to follow the service and click a mouse. With training, you'll learn how to create a livestream program from beginning to end. We'll be using an industry standard app, OBS, for production, so the skills you learn here will transfer to productions you might do in work, school or just for fun! Talk to David if you're interested.



First Christian Church

Disciples of Christ

8484 Old Hammond Hwy.
Baton Rouge, LA 70809-1317
225-926-4175 | fccbrla.org

SERVICES IN SANCTUARY RESUME SUNDAY, JUNE 7, AT 10:00 A.M.

JOIN US ONLINE FOR WORSHIP, PRAYER AND DEVOTIONALS: fccbrla.org