

Mountain Messenger

April 2020 Monthly Newsletter

McConnell Baptist Church 84 Church St Hiawassee, GA Phone: 706-896-2281 Email: info@mcconnellchurch.org

So much has changed since we started to lay out the April edition of the Mountain Messenger just a week or so ago, so this edition is a bit different! Please know that although we are not meeting together, your staff is hard at work behind the scenes to ensure that we stay in touch and meet needs as they arise.

At this time, the plan is to cancel all services, meetings & activities at the church campus and provide an online worship service on FaceBook and YouTube on Sundays at 10:15 am through April 6th. At that time, we will re-evaluate the situation based on CDC and governmental recommendations. We will communicate any change in this plan via Facebook and a phone call for those who do not have social media.

What You Can Do to Stay Connected:

Tune in to our live-stream each Sunday morning for our worship service on Facebook live and YouTube at the 10:15 AM time.

Follow us on Facebook and check out the online devotions given throughout the week by the pastoral staff.

Give online by choosing the giving option on the website or to give through your bank's Bill Pay option, if possible, until we resume regular services. Both are safe and secure options to continue giving regularly and help the church continue to meet its obligations.

Those who wish to mail in their contribution can do so at:

⇒ McConnell Baptist Church, PO Box 235, Hiawassee, GA 30546

For prayer requests, you can use any of these methods:

⇒ **Call** the church office at 706-896-2281 and leave a message.

⇒ **Send** us a message on Facebook.

⇒ **Email** your prayer request to connie@mcconnellchurch.org or office@mcconnellchurch.org.

⇒ **Text** CONNECT to 706-995-7515. This will then send you a link to the Connection Card.

If you need other assistance or help, simply call the office and leave a message. We will respond as quickly as possible. We have a group of volunteers who are willing to pick up medicine, groceries, and answer other needs as requested.

Pastor's Pen



When I wrote last month, I had no idea how much things could change in a very short time period. Almost overnight, the threat of the COVID-19 virus has come to our shores and turned our world upside-down. I never imagined that we would have to suspend

our worship services or activities for an extended period of time or that we would be advised to keep our social distance from others, but we are.

As I thought about the impact this would have upon our church and our community, I came across an article from Timothy Merrell, Chief Editor of Homiletics Magazine, that I wanted to share.

"Social distancing" is the new buzz word that many of us have had to add to our vocabulary. Many restaurants are closed, as are ski resorts, movie theatres and casinos. The NCAA March Madness tournament is gone, the NBA season is suspended, airlines are cutting domestic flights, and weddings have been postponed.

We are very careful, and rightly so, about stepping into crowds. We don't shake hands with each other. We wash our hands religiously and some even wear masks. So, if you're fortunate, you're hunkering down with at least a slight sense of optimism – *at least we have hand sanitizer and plenty of toilet paper*. If you run short... call Pastor Danny. He has hidden resources!

Social distancing may be an important strategy in fighting this thing but here's the rub: As much as we ought to practice SD, we can be sure of one thing. **God quite emphatically does not practice social distancing.** It is not in God's nature to be distant. The central event in the story of salvation - the Incarnation - is all about God entering our experience, not departing from it. Immanuel - God with us!

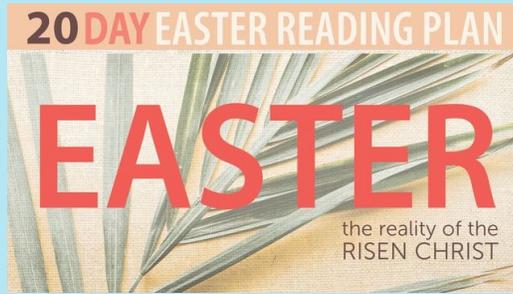
God will not and does not, distance himself from us. God has not done this in the past, God is not doing it now and God will not do it ever. This is a theme that runs throughout Scripture. God is near us, not distant from us. This is why the apostle Paul can say with authority:

Romans 8:35-39: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the weeks to come, social distancing and the government will require us to make sacrifices and we will have to find new ways of staying connected. Pastor Danny is now on Facebook and Instagram with the rest of the modern horde but as Paul reminds us, God will be with us no matter where we are. We will continue to stay connected by holding on firmly to the One who connects us all. Through Facebook, email, phone calls, and daily reminders, we will continue to be the church for the church is not a building or a weekly gathering but a people who have been called out to bear his image and his message to the world.

Walking by Faith, Not Fear!

Pastor Steve



20 Day Prayer & Fasting Emphasis March 23rd - April 12th

If there was ever a time when we needed to focus on prayer and fasting for our nation and our churches, it is now. During this unprecedented time, we would encourage all of our MMBC members and attenders to join us for 20 days of focused prayer and fasting as we approach Easter. There is an online devotional plan, **EASTER, the reality of the Risen Christ**, that you can follow along with the rest of us on the You Version Bible App.

Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.
1 Peter 5:7

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.
John 3:16

Blood Drive

McConnell will host a Red Cross Blood Drive on **Tuesday, April 7th, from 1 - 6 pm**. The Red Cross needs to collect more than 13,000 blood donations and more than 2,500 platelet donations each day to meet the demand for blood & blood products.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, blood donations have dropped and the nation's blood supply is at a critical low level.

The blood collected by the Red Cross helps millions of patients in over 2,500 hospitals and other facilities across the country. Life-saving blood components can support recovery from injuries or disease, and a single blood donation can give one to four patients a better outcome and a chance at survival. The Red Cross is taking every precaution to ensure donor safety, including positioning the donor beds far apart.

You may visit www.redcross.org to make an appointment to donate at this drive or walk ins are welcome!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!



Jim & Julie
Couch



Dale & Susan
Willrich



Jennie
Williams

Sympathy to

Jim & Sharon Blanton, at the death of their son, Jeff Blanton.

Mary Dolvin, at the death of her brother-in-law, George Dolvin.

Pat Smith, at the death of her husband, Jimmy.

The family of Francisca "Paca" Reed.

Servants in Service

Please understand that these schedules may change as things evolve with the COVID-19 outbreak. Stay tuned to our Facebook page or phone calls about any schedule changes.

Greeter Team - #8

Security - L. Thorpe

Ushers - Morning: J. Hyatt, Head Usher, Balcony Usher: B. Cone

P. Turner, J. Webb, M. Hedden, S. Ledford, B. Childress, T. Bouma, J. Sanderson

Evening: F. Witkowski, Head Usher

April 12th - Easter

INVITATION TEAM - T. Clark, T. Thomas

INFANTS & 2 YR OLDS, 3 & 4 YR OLDS

S. Watson, K. McRoberts, B. & S. McDaniels

PEAK KIDS - TBD

FIRST TOUCH - B. & J. Crowder

WELCOME DESK - R. & C. Larson

WELCOME CARTS - Capt. - D. Wilson

N. Stickeler, D. Shively, T. Turner

April 26th

INVITATION TEAM - B. McDaniels, P. Turner

INFANTS & 2 YR OLDS, 3 & 4 YR OLDS

L. Ledford, N. Dearborn, J. Cone, M. Mauldin

PEAK KIDS - TBD

FIRST TOUCH - R. & S. Moody

WELCOME DESK - TBD

WELCOME CARTS - Capt. - R. Peterson

R. Parker, L. Smith, C. Nicholson

April 19th

INVITATION TEAM - D. Ledford, T. Turner

INFANTS & 2 YR OLDS, 3 & 4 YR OLDS

B. Rutan, S. David, T. Brown, A. Awtrey

PEAK KIDS - TBD

FIRST TOUCH - M. & M. Hedden

WELCOME DESK - TBD

WELCOME CARTS - Capt. - J. Nichols

B. Miller, J. Brock, T. Wade

UPCOMING EVENTS

National Day of Prayer

Thursday, May 7th

Lord's Supper & Benevolence Offering

Sunday, May 17th

Children's Choir, Morning Worship Service

Sunday, May 10th

Awana Awards Banquet

Thursday, May 21st

Thrive Moms

Monday, May 11th

Preschool Graduation

Thursday, May 14th