

## March 24, 2020

Dear Church Family,

I hope this finds you doing well and being safe. Clella and I are much better from our recent bout with the flu. We still have some lingering cough episodes, and our energy hasn't fully recovered, but all in all, we are pleased with our progress. Thank you for your prayers and concerns.

As I mentioned to you last week, we have many reasons for gratitude even during these difficult times. Here are just a few:

1. The online video worship experience was wonderful. There are a host of people to thank for this, but we can all be grateful for their efforts to bring us before the Lord in such meaningful ways. If you were unable to watch our Sunday worship service this week, it is available on YouTube at the following link:  
[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5zKTKiXnrKXNdd-E11mbYH\\_cDBSn22S5](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL5zKTKiXnrKXNdd-E11mbYH_cDBSn22S5)
2. Connect groups are finding meaningful connections through various online venues. They are also doing a wonderful job of keeping up with each other which helps lessen the sense of isolation.
3. As of today, I have no knowledge that any of our people have contracted the coronavirus. The more of us who can stay well, the better.
4. The spirit of our people is strong. I continue to get a sense that we are remaining hopeful despite all the disruption. This optimistic attitude will help each of us as we move forward.
5. Many of you are continuing to faithfully support your church through your giving. This enables us to take care of our obligations and positions us to move forward once the virus crisis is over.

### **Now for a few announcements:**

1. All church activities remain on hold until further notice. The church building and the FLC remain closed. Your church staff continues to work remotely; the Church Office phone is being answered, so feel free to call (205) 822-1360 Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am – 4:30 pm, should you need us. I am on call this weekend, March 27 – 29, (205) 531-5758.

2. Denis is looking forward to virtual Crosstraining Wednesday at 6 pm. The Sasser sisters will lead in worship and Eleanor Jo Harwell will share a devotional thought before Denis shares a message from John 13, *When Betrayal Hits*. Please feel free to join us. All youth families are encouraged to follow us on Instagram SCBCYouth54 and join us on Instagram Live. Super Summer is a wonderful opportunity for 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade students to grow in their faith with peers from all over Alabama. If your child desires to attend, please register by April 1. <http://shadescrest.org/event/super-summer-2020/>
3. Hiram invites the Sanctuary Choir for a Zoom meeting once again this week. However, instead of Wednesday night, it'll be on **Friday, 3/27, at 7:00 pm**. He will send everyone in the choir an email with the link that should be used to join the conversation. Just make sure your device will have the microphone and the camera on. Last week's turnout was great and everyone in attendance had a good time. Don't miss out on this week's opportunity. Remember: Friday, not Wednesday. Also, starting this Thursday, one more resource will be available for your meditation. Every week during this time we are apart you will receive a link to a video that will allow you to listen to a piano arrangement that Brenda will be recording, along with a Scripture passage, and a prayer that you can pray while listening to the music.
4. All children and families are invited and encouraged to stay tuned to the Shades Crest Children's Ministry Facebook group and the parent GroupMe for continued communication about ways we can stay in touch. Ideas for spending time at home as a family will be shared, as well as opportunities for us to "gather" together.
5. There will be another recorded worship service that will go live on Sunday morning, March 29 at 9:00 a.m. Details about how to log on to the service will be sent to you in plenty of time. The title of my message is *How To Respond When Your World Falls Apart*, based on the book of Job.
6. The pastoral staff is developing a plan to hold an online Good Friday service should we still be unable to meet together.
7. The mail at the church is gathered each day; therefore your offerings are received, recorded, and deposited as usual.
8. Speaking of giving, here is a report of the last two weeks:

	Budget Needs	Budget Receipts	2020 Challenge
March 15	\$35,430	\$ 8,018	\$3,425
March 22	\$35,430	\$ 24,288	\$4,765

### Prayer Concerns:

1. policy makers, medical personnel, other frontline workers, the sick and dying and those who have lost their wages
2. Sidney Martin who is still struggling at home from pneumonia
3. those who live alone and feel more isolated as a result
4. nursing home residents who are cut off from their families, and for the workers as well
5. that the sickness curve will indeed flatten so that medical resources will not be overwhelmed
6. a healthy recovery of our economy so that jobs will be available for those who have lost them

### Prayer for Today:

*Dear God, despite all the social distancing we are experiencing, remind us that we aren't alone. For no matter where we are, we have the assurance that You are with us through the power of Your Holy Spirit. We cherish that truth especially in these days. It encourages us to know that we aren't left to our own defenses in the fight against this virus. For surely You are at work for good on our behalf in ways seen and unseen.*

*So continue to grant us the grace we need to manage the disruptions to our lives. Keep us mindful of those whose lives have been significantly altered and not just inconvenienced by this crisis. Help us to know how we can express neighbor love to others while avoiding putting ourselves and others at unnecessary risk. And remind us that You are still Lord of all.*

*And now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

Blessings to you,  
Brian Lee

# PREVIOUS UPDATES

## March 18, 2020

Our ministry and work will continue, but as of March 19, the church staff will be working remotely. Please feel free to call us at 205.822.1360 Monday - Thursday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm.

Youth Group will meet for virtual CROSSTRAINING on scbcyouth54 Instagram at 6 pm this evening.

## March 17, 2020

Dear Church Family,

In a time when most of the news we hear is bad, let me share some good news with you:

- The Lakeman and Strange Connect Groups gathered 200 hundred backpack lunches to be distributed at Green Valley Elementary for those kids who depend on the school system for a nutritious meal each day.
- Our Connect groups are working to stay in contact with each other during our time apart so that we will know how our people are doing.
- The deacon body will be paying special attention to our senior population especially those who are unable to get out of their homes. They want to make sure that their needs are met.
- Children and their families will be connecting with homebound and senior adult members through cards, letters, and phone calls. If your family would like to be involved, call Suzanne in the Church Office.
- We rejoice with Lisa and Chuck Williamson as they celebrate the birth of their granddaughter, Meredith Grace Williamson.
- With those good words in mind, and taking the place of this week's Spire email, [here are some announcements:](#)
- The visitation and the funeral service for Sigurd Bryan have been postponed indefinitely. Once the virus scare has passed, we will work toward rescheduling a time to celebrate the life of this wonderful man.

- The FLC will remain closed until further notice. As of right now, all church activities, (including the March 21 Shoal Creek Wildflower Trip) are canceled through Saturday, March 28. It is likely that we will stay closed for longer, but we are trying to take it a step at a time.
- We plan to have a video recording of a worship service posted on the church website for this Sunday, March 22. A special thanks to everyone for their efforts to provide a worship experience for our people during this time.
- Even though we are not meeting together, the financial obligations of the church continue. I hope you will join me in faithful giving so that we are not hindered in our work. Mail checks to 452 Park Avenue, Hoover, AL 35226, check with your bank about online giving, or call Laura Strange, who can assist you with other forms of electronic giving. Visit our giving page for more information.  
<http://shadescrest.org/give-2-2/>

**Please be in prayer for the following:**

- The Bryan family as they grieve the loss of Sigurd and face a disruption to their plans to celebrate his life.
- The Handy family as they grieve the loss of Bobbie, Charter Member of Shades Crest Baptist Church, March 16, 2020. A memorial service will be planned at a later date.
- Sidney Martin at Grandview and Joan Parker at St. Vincent's, as well as Paul Matthews and Ed Riddle, who have recently been released from the hospital.
- Policy makers who are trying to do what they can to lessen the impact of the virus. They have tough decisions to make. Pray that they will do what is right and best regardless of the political fallout.
- Healthcare workers here and around the world who are on the front lines of the battle against the Coronavirus. Pray that they will be strengthened within and protected as they serve us.
- Those who are being negatively impacted by the shutdown of our society through loss of income or the difficulty in meeting their basic needs.

**Stay in touch:**

- Use your ChurchLife App to connect with others. Laura Strange in the Church Office can help you set this up.
- Do you need us? Contact the Church Office Monday-Thursday, 8:00 am - 4:30 pm, 205.822.1360. The Minister on Call this coming weekend is Suzanne Reece, 205.907.7484.
- Visit [shadescrest.org](http://shadescrest.org) homepage for updates.

**I close with this word of prayer:**

*Dear God, so often we act as if we are in total control of our lives and can face any challenge with the strength of our might and the cleverness of our minds. Especially, as Americans we operate as if we are entitled to a better life just because we are Americans. But during these days, we have come to know that we are not as great as would like to think of ourselves as being. We are not in control of our lives. And we do not have the might nor cleverness to handle everything on our own. So we come to You humbled by a virus we can't even see.*

*Yet we know that You will never leave us nor forsake us. So we turn to You and we ask that You grant us the grace we need to persevere during this trial with Your wisdom and compassion. Help us to think of others and not just ourselves. Strengthen us with a spirit of perseverance that refuses to cower in fear but instead turns to You for a renewal of our faith.*

*Lord, we ask that in Your mercy, You would deliver us and the rest of the world from this affliction.*

*In Your mercy lessen the suffering of thousands of people who have already contracted this virus.*

*In Your mercy watch over all of those who are on the front lines of caring for the sick and dying.*

*In Your mercy give divine wisdom to policy makers to make the best possible decisions as to how we should respond to this crisis.*

*And in Your mercy we pray that You will empower your people to honor you through this experience by how we treat others and how we maintain a spirit of hopefulness instead of despair.*

Blessings to you,  
Brian Lee

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**March 14, 2020**

Dear Church Family,

By now I trust that you have received the news that we will not be holding services this Sunday due the ongoing developments concerning the coronavirus. The pastoral staff met this morning to continue developing plans for how we will function as a church community as we make our way through this situation. Below are the steps that we are currently taking.

1. All church services, Connect groups, and Wednesday night services will be cancelled through Saturday, March 28. Plans beyond that will be made as we get closer to it.
2. The FLC will be closing at 4:30 on Wednesday, March 18 at least through March 28.
3. The Church Office will be open this week at regular hours unless the situation merits a change. If you have business to conduct, you are welcome to come. However, social visits are discouraged at this time.
4. Committees are asked not to have face-to-face meetings and to either use email or conference calls if having a meeting is necessary.
5. Church-sponsored small groups that meet during the week are asked to not meet March 15 through March 28. Once again, decisions about the future will be made as we get closer to it.
6. The High Country 5K has been cancelled. This decision was made to protect the health of our people and the participants as well as to avoid incurring unnecessary expenses.
7. I am preparing a special sermon that will be posted on the church's website by Sunday morning, March 15. I hope you will listen to it as a way for us to join our hearts together as God's people even though we cannot be physically present at the church building.
8. We are working this week to see if we can have a video broadcast for Sunday, March 22 and beyond if needed.
9. Plans are underway to make sure that we are keeping up with our people especially those who might need additional support and encouragement. If you find that you are in need or know of someone else in need, please let us know. We want to do what we can to take care of one another.
10. Not meeting for two Sundays has the potential of creating a negative impact on our budget as well as our 2020 Challenge campaign. Let us resolve that we will maintain faithfulness in our financial stewardship so that our ongoing work will not be hindered. If you need help in electronic giving, please contact the church office.

I will be sending additional emails to you as this situation evolves. In the meantime, let us

continue to encourage and support one another. Likewise, let us pay attention to those we know in our community who made need our help. Certainly, we want to continue to pray for those making policy decisions, health care workers along with first responders, and those who are already sick. May this be a time when we pull together for the benefit of all.

Blessings to you,  
Brian Lee