

SERVING IN THE LOVE OF CHRIST

Week of April 5—11, 2020

Minister on Call

Rev. Anita Thompson, 395-0061

Deacons on Call

Carolyn Arrington, 395-2175

Charles Hughes, 287-8403

Sound System—April 5

James Early

Floral Offering—April 5

Worship Decorating Committee

Food Pantry – April 10

Closed for Good Friday

Bracy Scholarship Applications

Any FBCA members who will be college students during the 2020-2021 academic year are encouraged to apply for the Bracy Scholarship. Under our current shelter-in-place circumstances, applications will be mailed to homes upon request.

Please contact Anita if you would like an application. The applications are due in the church office on April 30.

Week of April 12—18, 2020

Minister on Call

Rev. Dr. Trey Gilliam, 398-7321

Deacons on Call

Claire Presley, 287-6132

Peggy Springfield, 287-3121

Sound System—April 12

Henry Daniels

Floral Offering—April 12

Worship Decorating Committee

Food Pantry—April 17

Otis & June Payne

The FBC Ministers

Trey Gilliam, Pastor

trey@fbcahoskie.org

252-398-7321

Anita Thompson, Associate Pastor

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THE WINDOW

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Concerns with Online Worship

I remember well the circumstances that led me to finally give in and open a Facebook account. In 2009, my friend Dr. Daniel E. Goodman served as the Bob D. Shepherd Chair of New Testament Interpretation for the Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity. He died unexpectedly at the age of 40. In an email exchange shortly before his passing, Dan lamented just a bit his 40th birthday. However, he acknowledged that turning 40 was better than the alternative. We simply do not know what each day holds. We do know, however, that life is fragile.

When Dan passed away I was in Scotland working on my Ph.D. at the University of Edinburgh. I was unable to return to the States in time for the memorial service. There was a Facebook page devoted to remembering Dan's short but impactful life. I needed to grieve. I needed to share. So, I opened a Facebook account and joined a community united by a strong affection for Dr. Goodman.

Just as I was hesitant to join Facebook and did not do so until I had no other option, I have been hesitant about livestreaming worship services. Yes, I have been hesitant about posting on our church website, church Facebook page, or church YouTube channel livestream worship and/or previously recorded complete worship services. Sermons are fine as they are instructional, but not complete worship services.

Allow me to share my concerns.

First, worship strikes me as a you need to be there event. Watching worship later is a bit like watching an athletic event when it is over. Even if you do not know the results; you know the activity is

finished. Who really wants to watch people sing hymns anyway? It is one thing to be present to sing hymns to God with a congregation. It is something else very different to watch people sing.

My main concern with livestreaming and posting recorded worship services is that worship becomes something it should never be – a spectator's sport. No, worship is intended to be participatory. When engaged with God, together with others in worship, no one sits the bench. We are all out on the field playing the game. When we 'watch' worship I worry that the whole dynamic relegates us to bench warmers. Worship should *never* be that way.

During this time when we cannot safely gather together, I have been forced to embrace livestreaming our entire worship services, as well as our Wednesday night Bible studies, just as I felt forced to join Facebook years ago. And as with Facebook, I readily acknowledge there are numerous benefits. I notice that our worship service from last Sunday, that is now posted on our church Facebook page, has 145 views. If we multiply that number, let's be conservative, times 1.5 to account for the occasions when another person watched with someone else, we get to 217.5 people "in worship" last Sunday. If we multiply 145 times 2 we get 290. That is more people than we would likely have had in our sanctuary. And we have not even factored in the radio congregation. Furthermore, I understand we had someone from the west coast with us for a recent Wednesday night Bible study. No doubt, livestreaming worship and then leaving the entire service posted increases our outreach. Nonetheless, numbers are not everything. Yes, I wrote that sentence! It still concerns me that, due to the reality that we cannot safely gather together and are forced to connect via social media, worship may occur with folks relaxing in their lounge



The Window

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Main and West Streets

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chair, drinking coffee, and switching back and forth between live or prerecorded worship and the most recent Saturday Night Live clips.

Even so, I am confident that when the current crisis passes, we will continue to livestream worship and leave it posted for others to engage with later. The benefits are numerous enough that I believe we need to continue. In fact, I am working now towards livestreaming worship from our Youtube channel, which is open to anyone any-time.

However, to help ease the theological concerns I have about spectator worship, I am very pleased with ideas Anita has expressed that will better enable us to stay engaged as we worship apart from one another. Please do strongly consider her suggestions found in her column in this edition of *The Window*.

What ideas do you have about participating, not spectating, in worship during our indefinite time of separation? And let's begin to think now, what attitudes and practices should we develop in order to stay engaged in the worship of God when that glorious day arrives, and we all gather together again in our beautiful sanctuary? May we reunite as a stronger worshipping community than we were when last we gathered in one another's company as well as the very presence of God.

In Christ,
Trey



Vote on Deacon Recommendation

The deacon recommendation to carry out the suggested renovation projects from the capital campaign committee passed by an overwhelming majority - 95.54%.

Pleased be assured that, in light of the current crisis in our country and the world, your church leadership will have significant discussion about when and how to move forward with these projects.



Worshipping Together

April 5, 2020
Palm Sunday

If We Die

Romans 8:1-4
Rev. Dr. Trey Gilliam

Normally we celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of the month. This month, however, we will observe the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday.



We are continuing to include in our worship services a time for receiving tithes and offering. You're encouraged to continue to make this part of your at home worshiping experience.

Perhaps you could write your check during the offertory, place it in an envelope, address and stamp it. And if there are children in your home, let them do the addressing and/or stamping. (PO Box 649, Ahoskie, NC 27910)

Some of you may be using online banking as the means to give your offering. Whatever the method of giving may be, your church is grateful for your continued practice of stewardship.



March 29, 2020

Weekly Need	\$ 9,130.28
Weekly Offering	\$ 9,110.12
Difference	\$ -20.16
YTD Needs	\$ 118,693.64
YTD Offerings	\$ 101,924.32
YTD Difference	\$ -16,769.32
Capital Campaign Weekly Total	\$ 160.00
Benevolence Weekly Offering	\$ 520.00

Thank You for your generous gifts!

From the Associate Pastor

Beginning Sunday, March 15, our church has had to be a church without gathering for worship on the Lord's Day. From what I've discerned, you've been doing this quite well. You've worshiped with your brothers and sisters in Christ through our radio broadcast and through Facebook live. Some of you have the technology at home which allows you to follow along using the order of worship available on our website. Thank you for your efforts to honor the Lord's Day by worshiping as a church the best we can under difficult circumstances.

When we first began to understand the seriousness of the coronavirus pandemic, we hoped it would be under control by Holy Week. Now, of course, we know that's not possible. Yet, Holy Week is upon us. How might we be able to journey through this most holy week together without gathering in our sanctuary? I have some ideas.

All of the Holy Week worship services will be live-streamed on our Facebook page, and will be broadcast on the radio, 99.3 FM. We're thankful that the radio station has agreed to air our Thursday and Friday evening services in addition to Sunday morning worship. Those two evening services will begin at 7:00.

In preparation for all the Holy Week worship services, I suggest you assemble some sort of altar in your home. Perhaps a small table or stool placed near your radio or screen would work nicely.

Palm Sunday—April 5



Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem. It's the day our children's choirs usually lead us in singing songs of "Hosanna!" as they wave palm branches in celebration. Oh, how we'll miss that this year!

We can still sing our hosannas, but we'll do so together from our homes. I encourage you to find a couple of leafy branches in your yard. Hang one on your front door to signify your participation in Palm Sunday worship. Place others on the altar, and keep another with you to use when worship begins. Then, whenever you sing, say, or hear the word, "Hosanna," wave your branch in the air and picture your church family doing the same from their homes.

Maundy Thursday—April 9



On Maundy Thursday we remember the institution of the Lord's Supper as we reflect on Jesus' Passover celebration with his disciples on the evening of his arrest. Trey and I will lead you through the Lord's Supper; therefore in preparation for this service, you'll need some form of bread, and grape juice, or another beverage. Place these items on the altar.

If you'd like to continue placing something on your front door to represent the holy day, a grapevine wreath would be appropriate.

Good Friday—April 10



On Good Friday we will hold our traditional Tenebrae service which takes us from the upper room to the cross. For this service, you'll need seven candles, which you'll progressively extinguish, and one candle (preferably white) which will serve as the Christ Candle. If you have any black fabric, cover the altar with it and place the items on the altar. If you have a cross in your home, place it among the candles.

As Trey and I lead you through the Passion story, you're invited to follow our lead in extinguishing the candles.

Easter Sunday—April 12



Of all the worship services for which we'll miss gathering together, Easter Sunday is the service which will grieve us the most. Nevertheless, we *can* give the day its due from our homes.

If you have white fabric, cover the altar with it and then place on it the cross and Christ Candle. Surround them with flowers. If you have any kind of bell, keep it with you throughout the service and ring it whenever you sing, say, or hear the word, "Alleluia."

I'd love you to take pictures of your home altars and post them on our church Facebook page. Let's connect as much as possible during Holy Week, and encourage one another while we shelter-in-place. You are loved and prayed for!

Grace & peace,

Anita