

Reopening Begins

When Governor Eric Holcomb issued a “stay at home” order beginning Tuesday, March 23, at 11:59 p.m., it was expected to last 2 weeks. Our churches “closed” and began finding alternative ways to worship and serve while sequestered in homes. It would be nearly two months later before the governor would issue a plan for reopening the state and begin allowing churches to meet again. Starting on May 8, churches were allowed to reopen, with restrictions. They were encouraged to continue using livestream, virtual services, and drive-in services. Additionally, it was suggested that they wait to reopen preschool and children areas until schools reopen, to clean and sanitize their entire facility, to offer multiple service times to encourage a greater opportunity for social distancing, to have a sign-up for services with an attendance and capacity plan, and to consider suspending in-person choirs or praise team or, if praise teams were used, to use proper social distancing and limit team members.



Redeemer Baptist Church in Anderson re-opened on May 17. Pews were removed for greater distancing and attendees were encouraged to wear masks and sit 6 feet apart by family units.

wonderful to be able to worship together again. This was the same sentiments expressed by the Albany and Montpelier congregations. Our churches agreed that although it was great to meet together, it might not be the best decision for everyone. They are offering their FaceBook Live services for those who continue to quarantine during this time.

New Day Baptist Church in Pendleton re-opened on May 16 and their campuses in Alexandria and Muncie re-opened May 17. Redeemer Baptist Church in Anderson also re-opened on May 17. Old Town Hill Baptist Church in Muncie and North Delaware in Muncie plan to open June 7. As with all our churches, accommodations were made to make the gathering safer for those in attendance. Seats were spread out to allow for social distancing, masks were encouraged, sanitizer was made available, doors were left opened or opened for you with the greeter behind the door, small groups/Sunday School classes were suspended. Children's worship and activities were not offered. But, whether in the church building or at home via the Internet, our people still worship.

LAST MEAL & CHURCH RE-OPENING

Today is the last meal delivery. It's been a blessing to serve you during Indiana's Stay-at-Home period. As we move "Back On Track", we'll stop meal delivery and open the church to in-person services on Saturday @ 6 pm (Pend) & Sunday @ 11 am (Alex). Sunday School and other Church activities will not meet at this time. Recommended guidelines:

- Individuals 65 and above or who have underlying at-risk health conditions are asked to stay at home and watch services online each Sunday at 11:00 am via our NDBC Facebook pages.
- BEFORE entering the building:
 - Put on your personal face covering
 - Sanitize your hands
- Ensure 6 feet between individuals or family units.
- Alternate rows for seating wherever possible.
- Utilize non-contact greetings.
- Do not hand out material or offer foods/drinks.

We look forward to worshipping together with you this weekend!

This was the list of adjustments New Day Baptist Church posted on their Facebook page. Each of our churches made similar adjustments based on their congregation and building.

There were several challenges for our churches to address and many of our pastors took the opportunity to meet together weekly via a Zoom Leader Lab meeting to support one another and share challenges and ideas.

At least three of our churches re-opened on May 10, Mother's Day: Kingston Avenue Baptist Church in Anderson, Integris Community Church in Albany, and First Baptist Church in Montpelier. Kingston's pastor, Tim Overton, said that all went well and that all who attended agreed it was

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Dr. Ron Ross

The Katecheo

Quarantine is an interesting word. According to Webster's Dictionary, the word represents "a period of compulsory isolation or detention to prevent contagion or infection [originally for a ship]." The word is derived from a Latin word *quaranta* which means "forty." With that bit of an introduction, how has your "time of separation" been coming along? Our household has tried to follow the guidelines as prescribed, but, you know, it gets old after awhile. Maybe that's a light at the end of the tunnel; well, whether it is or not, this has been a time of meditation, reflection, and evaluation. It is in that line of thought that the following flows.

In reading God's Word to the Apostle Paul, who in turn shared it with the saints at Ephesus, Paul writes, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him." [Ephesians 1.3-4] Historically, the Ephesian believers had allowed themselves to be influenced by the beliefs and teachings of false teachers. What would alarm anyone with an apologetic ministry is the fact that possibly six letters and a gospel were dispatched to that city (Ephesians, First and Second Timothy, First and Second John, the Gospel of John and the Revelation) to counter the impact of erroneous teachings. Thirty to thirty-five years later, the saints received word from Jesus Christ (Revelation 2.1-7) "they had left their first love". Today, that area is a Muslim stronghold.

Meditating on a small portion of that letter (Ephesians 1.3-4) we find the words, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." The Father's choice for you is the most important event that has ever occurred in your life. It is because of the Father's choice that Jesus Christ died for you. It is because of the Father's choice that the Holy Spirit convicted you of sin and furthermore provided you the faith (John 1.12) in order to receive Him as your Savior. It is because of the Father's choice that you have been adopted into His Family, indwelt,

and gifted by the Holy Spirit. It is because of the Father's choice that you pursue godliness and live in holiness. It is because of the Father's choice that those unsaved people around you are being convicted by the Holy Spirit of their sin and will seek you out, inquiring how they can experience what is evident in your life.

It is all because of the Father's choice, but please be reminded that nothing takes Him by surprise, even this pandemic. People will worry and fret, but for those chosen by Him...rest in His presence!

Something to ponder as we "stay in place."



Please pray for our pastors and their wives on these special occasions.

Birthdays

June 3—Bruce Reynolds
(Old Town Hill, Muncie)

June 5—Mark Wilkerson
(FBC, Eaton)

June 23—Cassie Kinney
(Remedy City)

June 28—Pam Watson
(Halteman Village, Muncie)

June 29—Lisa Storm
(Redeemer, Anderson)

Wedding Anniversaries

June 15—Brad and Lisa Storm,
(Redeemer, Anderson)

Pastor-Church Anniversaries

June 1—Brad Storm,
Redeemer, Anderson, 17
years

June 8—Tim Overton,
Kingston, Anderson, 3 years

Upcoming Events

SBC Emphasis for June

SBC Convention—Cancelled

June 21—*Baptist Men's Emphasis*

June 28—*Mission: Dignity Sunday
and Citizenship & Religious
Liberty Sunday*

Disaster Relief Team Ministers Despite Covid-19

Needs do not stop when the nation becomes quarantined and our ECBA Disaster Relief Team knows this well. They have worked on 7 houses since the quarantine began and Homeland Security has just asked them to do another one.

Most recently, they have finished a project

on the home of a family with two daughters who have had spine issues causing them to be wheelchair-bound their entire lives. The team was able to widen doors, redo flooring, and put in a wheelchair ramp (see pictures).

Disaster Relief Team Coordinator, Joe

Fox, said that they have also received a \$9,000 grant from SAW that will be used to install wheelchair ramps this summer. Joe never ceases to praise God for these opportunities to share His love with those in need. Please continue to pray for Joe and our Disaster Relief volunteers.



Disaster Relief Team works on building a wheelchair ramp.



Completed ramp is a joy for the family.

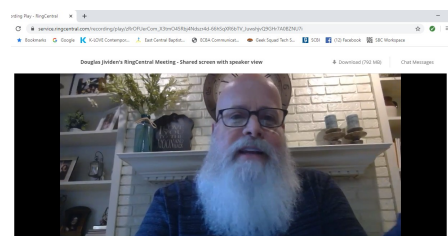
Pastors Help and Encourage Each Other through Zoom Meetings

The Covid-19 Pandemic is a situation that none of our churches have faced before. It has presented new challenges as each church determines how to function as the Church in the midst of stay-at-home orders and the closing or restrictions of businesses and services. One way our ECBA pastors have received support and encouragement to maneuver through this process is via weekly Leader Lab Zoom meetings. For several years now, our pastors have held a monthly Leader Lab meeting and luncheon but with this unusual situation, they decided to meet weekly via Zoom. The Zoom meeting was first held on April 16 and each Thursday since then.

Each week pastors have voiced just how helpful these hour meetings have been. They have shared resources and information. They have encouraged one another and prayed for each other. Bi-vocational pastor, Jeremy Cowin, at First

Baptist Church – Montpelier, has found these meeting especially helpful. Ordinarily, he is unable to attend the monthly Leader Lab meeting due to his other job but because these are virtual, he has been able to participate. His church was having difficulty locating hand sanitizer and this group helped him find available products. It was also through these meeting that some of our pastors learned of an available \$5,000 technology grant and how to apply for it.

Doug Jividen, North American Mission Board (NAMB) Regional Church Planting Catalyst for Mobilization and Equipping, leads these meetings each week. During one session he asked what advice the pastors have from this time. Things that pastors said they had learned included: "Be yourself; don't try to be the 'big church.'" "We are all going through a cycle of grief and need to help each other through it." "There will be a new normal."



Pastor Jeremy Cowin, FBC Montpelier, enjoyed getting to be part of Leader Lab meetings.

"When God is at work in your life, there is always an *uncomfortable* growth." "We need to support one another. Not every decision will be the same for each of us." "We need to over-communicate." "Celebrate people's adjustments in growing closer to God." "Does anything great come without struggle?" Changes caused by this pandemic have been and continue to be a struggle, but God is doing a great work through it. Watch Him work!

EAST CENTRAL BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

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Rescheduled ECBA Meeting

Quarterly ECBA Associational Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Pitch-in (Country-cooking theme) - 6:00 p.m.

Meeting - 7:00 p.m.

(All dependent upon current quarantine suggestions)

Integris Community Church

356 W State Street

Albany IN 47320