



# FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

## MARTINSVILLE, VA

March 18, 2020

Dear Church Family,

The reality of a global pandemic is setting in for all of us with changes to much of what we do day-by-day. As a church family, we are trying to care for our neighbors as best we can. The Coordinating Council decided at our virtual meeting this morning to forego all in-person worship or meetings until May 10, 2020. We will be in touch about our in-person schedule again closer to that date.

Just because we aren't meeting in person for a while does not mean we stop being the church. Quite the contrary! The church is made up of God's people doing the work of loving God and neighbor in this world, and for now, at least part of that love shows through in our decisions to distance ourselves physically from one another.

Distance does not have to include anything other than our physical presence, though. This is a sacred time for us to reach out in *new ways* – to use technology like Virtual Church services ([fbcmartinsville.com/worship-services](http://fbcmartinsville.com/worship-services)), DVD ministry (call and let us know if you would like one mailed to you!), Zoom conferences for Bible Study and meetings, plus daily care for one another via phone calls, cards, and letters.

These changes should not be something coming from our anxiety and panic, though. These changes are part of our **love and preparation**. We have an extraordinary opportunity to strengthen our church and community in new ways with our selfless love that reduces fear, increases faith, and moves us from self-protection to serving others. Jesus walks with us when we face scary situations, and Jesus transforms them into a new and beautiful work of ministry.

As a church, we are trying our best to embrace this new and beautiful ministry. For the next six weeks, you can expect the following:

- **For the time being, our church office is open**, but with reduced hours, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Our Early Learning Center (ELC) remains open** and is reassessing week-by-week.
- **Worship is *not cancelled*** – it simply has transitioned to a **Virtual Format**. What does that mean? You can visit our website [fbcmartinsville.com](http://fbcmartinsville.com) and click the Virtual Church link on the home page, or click on the worship menu and choose to “Watch Worship Services.” You can also request a copy of a DVD of the service to be mailed to you (or dropped off at your doorstep). Having trouble logging on? Call the church office! We would love to help you connect.
- **Expect a call from your deacon soon**. The deacons will be asking you whether you need anything from our church (errands run, medications delivered, etc.), offering to pray for you, and making sure you are connected, even when we can't see each other face to face. And please, don't

hesitate to contact me, your deacon, or the church office if you need anything! We are here to care for each other, and if you need some assistance, we want to help.

- **Opportunities for giving continue** - The church will continue to be in operation during these weeks, and we will need your generous giving. You can mail your tithes and offerings to the church or give online at [fbcmartinsville.com/give](http://fbcmartinsville.com/give). We also continue to raise money for the CBF Offering for Global Missions, so be sure to list any gift to the that offering in the memo of your check or in the memo line on your check or on our online giving site.
- **We hope soon to be offering some online learning opportunities for Bible study.** Please watch your email for links to these opportunities in the next week or so. If you have the ability to log on, we can continue to study together “live.”
- **Send us your prayer concerns.** We continue to pray for one another. Call, email, or text the church office or your deacon and let us know how we can pray for you.
- **When able, help out.** Not everyone can get out right now. But for those who can, be willing to run to the grocery store; willing to pick up medications; willing to run other errands. Please, let the church office know so we can add you to our Missions Team. When a need arises, we will be contacting this team for help!

Please, join us in being the church in new ways these next few weeks! I think perhaps we have something new to learn about how God works in this world. Let’s be open to that transformation, giving ourselves some fresh experiences in this temporary season of change.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Libby M. Grammer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Libby M. Grammer  
*Senior Pastor*