

First News

March 24, 2021



Journey With Jesus

Randy Shepley

Next week, we will begin Holy Week together as a congregation. Sometimes, Holy Week is called "Passion Week." The word "passion" in this instance means suffering. Therefore, we are moving into the week of the Christian calendar where we reflect upon and even join Jesus in His suffering on behalf of all creation.

This year, our theme for Holy Week is *Journey With Jesus*. Our goal as a church this week is to not merely celebrate Easter, but to walk through next week with a mindful prayerfulness regarding Jesus' suffering and death. To aid you in this journey, church staff members have written brief daily devotionals for each day of Holy Week. These writings will post on Facebook and Instagram for you to read as you ponder the experience, resolve, and suffering of Jesus each day of Holy Week. On Maundy Thursday, our Hispanic congregation will worship together in our sanctuary and on Good Friday, our English-speaking congregation will worship and remember the sacrifice of Jesus. Both services will be broadcast live online as well.

In addition to the above opportunities, Ethan Brown, our Pastor of Young Adults and Digital Ministry, is developing a digital prayer experience for our church family. This is a prayer experience you may embrace as you pray at home, or you may use this prayer experience as you walk in your neighborhood. We are inviting our entire congregation to engage in this digital prayer experience on Holy Saturday, in between Good Friday and Easter. You will find more information about this prayer experience, and our entire week of *Journeying with Jesus* in this and next week's newsletter, as well as in our regular church social media posts throughout the next week. I hope you will join us throughout next week, as we *Journey With Jesus*!



Lenten Journeys

During the season of Lent we remember the hopelessness and futility of life without Christ. Truly, "we are dust and to dust we shall return."

Lent is often known as a time of fasting in which we give up something good to taste life's bitterness. Yet Lent is also a journey as we see Jesus demonstrate true faithfulness on the road to Jerusalem and the cross. This journey is one in which we are all invited into. It is only in this journey to the cross will we find the life and redemption of Easter.

For the six weeks of Lent, join our ministers each Wednesday at 7 PM as we discuss a spiritual practice for the week. Meeting on Zoom, we will spend 30 minutes learning a new practice and sharing our stories and experiences from the previous session. Together we will explore what it means to be faithful and human during these times. Just follow the Zoom link below. I hope you will join us on the road.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/94585114534?pwd=Tnc3QnFIV3pyL1BTRTdNejVrODVUUT09>

Meeting ID: 945 8511 4534
Passcode: 252385

What About Easter?

Of course, our *Journey With Jesus* is taking us not only to the cross, but to Resurrection Sunday. We are looking forward to worshipping in person and online this Easter Sunday, especially since last year, we were only online.

If you are planning on joining us in person for worship on Easter Sunday, our Emergency Management Ministry Action (EMMA) Team, Vision Team, and Ministry Staff have adopted some changes due to new CDC guidelines and the prevalence of vaccinations among many of our church members. The changes are as follows:

- 1. Starting Easter Sunday, providing personal information for contact tracing will be optional:** Up until this point, anyone attending in-person worship at FBCNN was required to sign in and provide a phone number. This allows us to notify any attendees of potential COVID 19 exposure in the sanctuary building. Beginning on Easter, this will become an optional step.
- 2. Starting Easter Sunday, persons attending in-person worship at FBCNN will be allowed to find their own seats without assistance from a member of our Emergency Management Ministry Action (EMMA) Team:** Additionally, service attendees will be allowed to exit the service on their own. We will still follow our physical distancing protocols in seating. We will also enter through the double front doors and exit through the side doors as we have been doing. EMMA Team hosts will still be present and available to help if you need any assistance.
- 3. Starting Easter Sunday, congregational singing will be permitted while wearing a mask:** Mask-wearing remains mandatory for participation in in-person worship.
- 4. All services will continue digitally:** Our church recognizes that digital ministry is not an interim step, but instead, it is an entirely new frontier for connecting people with Jesus. Therefore, we will not only continue our online digital presence, but we will expand and improve it. Digital ministry is

Easter at FBCNN

Palm Sunday, March 28

Our children are invited to wave palm branches before our 8:30 and 10:30 worship services. They will stand on the sidewalks by the sanctuary entrance and welcome everyone to worship with palm branch waving and shouts of "Hosanna!" Please arrive 15 minutes before worship. Children under the age of 5 years must be accompanied by their parent/adult. Join us as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem!



Journey with Jesus: Holy Week

We are approaching the climatic moments of our journey with Jesus through the season of Lent. Starting with Palm Sunday on March 28, Holy Week recognizes the significant moments of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem that conclude with the dark night of his crucifixion and death on Friday and the silence of the grave on Saturday as all creation holds its breath for Easter morning. To help us walk this road to the cross, we will have a devotional written by one of our ministers posted to our Facebook and Instagram pages and sent by email Monday through Friday of Holy Week. On Saturday we will provide a link to a time of guided prayer through the Stations of the Cross. Be looking for more information about this time of prayer next week. We hope in these moments of reflection, you will see how Jesus' story intersects our own and that we too are called to "take up our cross and follow" (Matthew 16:24). We are all pilgrims on this journey together.

Good Friday Service April 2 at 7pm

Join us for this special time of worship and reflection.

Easter, April 4 8:30am & 10:30am

Join us as we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus! Bring flowers to place on the cross outside near the sanctuary entrance.



not a bridge to our new normal; digital ministry is a core piece of our future.

We remain committed to the safety of our church members, attendees, and neighbors during this COVID 19 season. I am grateful that we are making gains as a nation, and that we as a church are able to move to a new phase of gathering. I am hopeful that we will be able to return to many opportunities over the next couple of months, but let's all remember: this is a gradual return. As I have noted in recent articles, this COVID 19 season has changed church forever for American Christianity. We will, like nearly every church, experience a gradual return of people to our building, but now, more than ever, we must invest energy and resources in developing communities and gatherings outside the walls of our building, as well as online. We have an exciting and challenging future ahead. I will continue writing more on these themes after Easter.

For now, however, I am looking forward to joining all of you as we *Journey With Jesus*.

Weekly Worship Opportunities

Join us for worship in person or online Palm Sunday March 28 at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.! Randy Shepley will be preaching. If you have any technical difficulties watching the service on Facebook Live, please send us a direct message on Facebook so we can help troubleshoot the issue.

The following is a list of weekly events that can be accessed on the First Baptist Church of Newport News Facebook page, youth events that can be accessed on their Instagram page-@fbcnnyouth, and young adult events that meet using Zoom. The 8:30 and 10:30 Sunday worship services are uploaded to our [website](#) each Monday, and can be accessed by clicking on the Resources tab.

Sundays

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
9:30 a.m. Youth Sunday Bible Study
9:30 a.m. Children's Sunday School
10:00 a.m. Pre-K & Kindergarten S.S.



Mulch Mania

A huge **THANK YOU** to the 45+ people who came out on Saturday, March 20 to freshen up the exterior of our church with new mulch. We were blessed to have a variety of ages from our church and members of Boy Scout Troop 6 helping. Thanks to all especially our Mulch Madness leader Kris Keyes!



Staff Day of Service

The staff spent Tuesday morning putting 198 Blessing Bags together for Thrive! The bags contained a variety of toiletry items and household cleaning supplies that were donated to Thrive by Northside Church.

10:30 a.m. Contemporary Worship
12:30 p.m. Hispanic Worship

Mondays

7:00 p.m. Young Single Adults

Tuesdays

7:30 p.m. Young Adult Couples

[FBCNN Facebook Live Videos](#)

If you missed Sunday's service and do not have a Facebook account, you can click [here for 8:30](#) or [here for 10:30](#) to watch it on our Vimeo page.

Easter Lilies

We are offering a new way to honor or remember someone through Easter Lilies. Purchase a lily on your own and deliver it to someone who may need a visit, cheering up, or may need to see a smiling familiar face. If you would like to participate, please call or email (nikki@fbcnn.org) the church office and provide the name(s) of those you wish to honor or remember by March 29. A list of those participating will be published in the March 31 and April 7 editions of First News.

Red Cross Blood Drive April 15 1:30-6PM Payne Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendars for our next blood drive! Help the Red Cross help others by supporting in one of three ways:

1. Donate blood. You can sign up online by clicking [here](#) or calling 1-800-Red-Cross and let them know you would like to donate at First Baptist Church Newport News on April 15. All donors will receive a COVID antibody test and the results will be emailed to them within 2 days.
2. Be one of two volunteers needed from our church to sign in and register donors as they arrive. You can sign up to volunteer by clicking the link above or calling 1-800-Red-Cross.
3. Pray for those volunteering, donating, and receiving.

Their goal is to receive 30 successful collections. Let's help them reach that goal!

Make a financial contribution to FBCNN today by clicking on the link below.

DONATE

Donation Opportunity for Those with IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMD)

Congress has approved a permanent charitable giving tax break, known as the "IRA charitable rollover". The rollover is available for those who are 70 1/2, though if your 70th birthday is July 1, 2019 or later, you do not have to take withdrawals until you reach age 72. You can make a Qualified Charitable Distribution from your IRA of up to \$100,000 to a charity, such as First Baptist Church. The donation will count toward your IRA required minimum distribution.

The distribution is not recognized as income on your tax return. As such, you do not take a donation deduction either. With the change in the recent Tax Legislation, the Standard Deduction has doubled thus itemized charitable deductions will no longer be needed to be kept track of. By donating all or part of your IRA RMD to the church, you receive the benefit of a reduced Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) in that the RMD to charity is not taxed, which helps the opportunity of obtaining lower cost for your Medicare Part B and Prescription Drug premiums.

The distribution must come directly from the IRA account to the church not through the owner of the account. Let our Financial Services Coordinator, Monica Garcia, know how you want the contribution designated, such as the General Fund.

Rick Elofson, Treasurer FBCNN

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