

# Evangelism and Church Growth

Paul's purpose in his three missionary journeys was to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul, who once opposed this Good News, after his conversion met great opposition. Some coming from other Christians who did not hide their fear and distrust of Paul.

In 2Corinthians 11 Paul speaks of the great challenges he faced. Beatings, stonings and even shipwrecks were part of his service. Acts 16:25 tells us that even while in a Philippian jail, Paul's witness did not end. He and Silas prayed and sang praises to the Lord. Their witness of God's power and provision led to the conversion of the Prison Guard and his family.

2020, the year of the Corona Virus has taught each of us that we, as church leaders and members, will deal with difficult circumstances. We will make painful decisions and we must be willing to trust in and pursue sharing the Gospel in ways that may be unfamiliar, uncomfortable and even frightening.

Jesus's command in Matt 28 does not change because of our current or future circumstance. He says in verse 19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen".

It is this committee's desire to encourage our Hightower Baptist Association family to keep the faith and press on!! Through methods and technology that many of us had never used, we were led to share the Gospel. We have seen Drive up services, Parking Lot services, Facebook Live services that many of us never thought we would do. We have used Zoom internet meetings for Sunday School and Bible Study classes. We have preached from living rooms, Bedrooms, Sunrooms and Kitchens and even heard of one preaching from a roof top!! Where He leads, may we always follow!!

Remembering Paul's words in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith".

With Our Prayers,  
Rev Gary Martin, Chairman  
Rev Don Westray  
Rev Donnie Nix

## Moral Issues

The moral condition of our Country and even our area should trouble the hearts of every saved person. God's Word tells us in Genesis 13:12, of a man named Lot that pitched his tent toward Sodom. The men of Sodom were wicked sinners before the Lord exceedingly, the Bible tells us. We must be careful how close to "Sodom" that we allow ourselves to become.

In Genesis 19:1, Lot sat in the gate of the city. He was no longer only looking at Sodom; he had become a resident of Sodom. When the two angels came to destroy the city, Lot arose and took them into his house. Later, when the men of Sodom compassed the house, they wanted Lot to bring the angels out. Lot said to them, "Do not so wickedly, I have two daughters and will bring them out to you and do ye to them as is good in your eyes." This was the moral result of living in sin for an extended time. When the angels told Lot to get his family out of the city, the Bible tells us that Lot seemed as one that mocked when he warned them. The influence of Lot's testimony

to his family and those around him was destroyed. The Bible states that the Lord being merciful, brought them forth. Lot was so spiritually and morally bankrupt that he could not even get his family to safety. 2 Peter 2:8 says that Lot was a righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. Living in Sodom and in sin had destroyed everything that was close to Lot.

May God help us to learn from Lot that we may live each day close to God, continually seeking His will for our lives so that we may encourage and lead others to Jesus.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sam Rickett  
Ronny Bennett  
Danny Orr

## Sunday School

This year the Sunday School Committee held two roundtable discussions to discuss issues facing our Sunday Schools, one at Brookwood and one at Coal Mountain. Our intention had been to hold a few more, but the pandemic changed those plans.

We also started a discussion group on Facebook, as well as a separate email list for Sunday School-related announcements. The pandemic altered those plans as well.

While many hoped that these unprecedented times would result in people drawing closer to the Lord, a survey by the American Bible Society shows that it has actually had the opposite effect:

*“In 2019, over one-third of American adults (35%) said that realistically they never use the Bible outside of a large church service or mass. In January, that number was statistically unchanged. However, by June of 2020, that proportion had fallen to 31%. Additionally, many Scripture engaged adults were finding it difficult to maintain their relationship with the Bible. The proportion of Americans who use the Bible daily also fell to fewer than one in ten (9%), the lowest number on record during the ten years of the State of the Bible research study.*

*“The study shows a direct correlation between increased Scripture engagement and those efforts typically organized by a church, including mentorship programs and small group Bible studies. Church closures due to COVID-19 are therefore likely contributing to decreased rates of Scripture engagement.”*

We anticipate that our churches will find similar results. If so, we are concerned about the long-term effect on our Sunday School participation rates. If people have gotten used to not being in Sunday School, how many will return as Sunday Schools begin to meet again?

At our roundtable discussion at Coal Mountain, we asked attendees *“Why are you here? What do you want to get out of this time?”* One man answered something that I (Shane) will never forget: *“A magic bullet.”*

That summed up my feelings better than anything ever has. During my three years on this committee, the main question we’ve been trying to answer is how to reverse the long slide in Sunday School attendance and get people to start participating again. Hearing *“a magic bullet”* made me realize I, too, had been looking for some answer that we were missing — one thing we weren’t doing that would turn everything around. After three years, though, I don’t believe it’s that easy. I don’t believe there is a magic bullet. Instead, I think each of our churches have to begin by answering two questions.

## **1. Is Sunday School important to us?**

This committee knows that Sunday School is important, as do many in our Association. The New Testament makes clear, from beginning to end, that God's plan for us is not only that we be born again, but that we also grow into mature believers, compared against Jesus himself.

For example, Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:11-15:

*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.*

Sunday School is our Association's primary vehicle for helping people grow up, so it is absolutely critical if we want to see our people grow into spiritual maturity. Each church must determine for themselves if they agree.

## **2. Do we have a culture that communicates that Sunday School is important?**

Each church needs to examine whether their words and actions convey how critical Sunday School is. Is it being communicated regularly and consistently through what people see and hear Sunday after Sunday and throughout the week? Until it is, for most people Sunday School will remain an afterthought.

There is plenty more to having a successful Sunday School program — these questions are the beginning, not the end — but they are where we have to start if we hope to reverse this slide in each of our churches.

Prayerfully submitted,  
Shane Pike  
Scott Gilbert  
Laurie Vandergrift

## **Vacation Bible School**

No report due to COVID – 19.

## **WMU**

Good Afternoon, Hightower Baptist Association. What a crazy, unusual year we have had! I'm so sorry that we had to modify our schedule this year for fewer people to attend our Associational Meeting due to the pandemic. I hope that this report finds you well and thriving in your walk with Jesus to be on a MISSION for those you serve and those around you.

Even during a Pandemic, let us, the Hightower Baptist Association, assemble together in support of our Women's Missionary Union's primary goal: To Make Disciples of Jesus who live on a Mission. We carry out this goal by our objectives: Provide Missions Discipleship resources for churches and individuals; Offer opportunities to engage with Compassion Ministries; and Equip people through Leadership Development experiences.

At our Fall “Women on a Mission” Series at Pinnacle Retreat Center, we heard from our National WMU President, Sandy Wisdom-Martin. Everything we do in life should be plain and simple: **Missions Matter Most.** What is the definition of a “Mission”? It is the vocation or calling of a religious organization, especially a Christian one, to go out into the world and spread its faith.

So, every breath we take and every step we make, we are to live our lives for the purpose of sharing the love of Jesus Christ. He, who gave every breath He had and every drop of blood, for you and me. Though our different Ministries throughout our Association may vary in size, structure and even in style, always remember: **Missions Matter Most.** What does that look like? It looks like sharing Jesus!

Following are just a few examples of living on a Mission that the Hightower Baptist Association WMUs have continued to do, even in a global pandemic:

### **Missions Discipleship:**

When we serve refreshments at Vacation Bible School, we share Jesus. When we collect funds to support national and international missionaries like Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong and Mission Georgia, we are sharing Jesus! When we provide Bibles for newborns so that parents can encourage them to read God’s Word always, we Share Jesus. When we sponsor GA and RA and Mission Friends in our churches, we share Jesus! When we organize Operation Christmas Child Shoebox pack parties, we share Jesus. When we recognize high school graduates with gifts and pray for their futures, we share Jesus. When we support Jessie’s House, Inc., we share Jesus!

### **Compassion Ministries:**

When we feed lunches to hungry kids all summer in our community, we share Jesus. When we donate over 1800 snacks for 2 different school’s low-income children, we share Jesus. When we provide ICU baskets to Northside Forsyth, we share Jesus. When we provide a meal for a bereaved family or Thanksgiving dinner for shut-ins, we share Jesus. When we donate money to SISU for challenged children, we Share Jesus. When we collect and take toys to Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta for Christmas, we share Jesus. When we Load the Truck, we share Jesus. When we host a blood drive at our churches, we share Jesus. When we donate to Pure Water/Pure Love for clean water for all people, we share Jesus. When we support the Wayne Cook Family Mission through Vision Baptist Church Ministry, we share Jesus. When we purchase blankets for our Food/Clothing Bank, we share Jesus. When we pack a Backpack for Kids we may not ever meet on this side of Heaven, but we pray to meet them one day in Glory, we share Jesus!

### **Leadership Development:**

When we attend Georgia Baptist Conferences, we share Jesus. When we participate in Bible Studies, we share Jesus. When we provide college scholarships to church youth through the WMU, we share Jesus. When we make donations to the North Georgia School of Music so that others will learn to lead and sing Christian music, we share Jesus! When we send kids to Church Camp to learn who Jesus is and how to be more like Him, we share Jesus. When we recognize members celebrating their 90<sup>th</sup> birthdays and we learn from their legacy, we Share Jesus. When we provide donations to the Cooperative Program and GA Baptist Children’s Home so that others may know about His Holy Name, we share Jesus!

"RELENTLESS" is the theme of our National WMU for 2020-2021. When this was announced, we immediately began trying to find legitimate ways to share this theme. The scripture verse is as follows: “But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” (Hebrews 10:39 KJV).

We will be relentless as we:

- Live authentic faith in Christ
- Seek God in Prayer
- Give Sacrificially
- Witness to Others

For those of you who may not know, WMU was established as, and remains an auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention and has educated and involved generations in Christian missions since its inception in 1888. It is our purpose to challenge Christian believers to understand and be radically involved in the mission of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ. Women's Missionary Union is a mission organization that was founded by a few women dedicated to the cause of missions. Since that time, WMU has become the largest Protestant organization for women in the world, with approximately one million members. To this day, Hightower Baptist Association WMU is still just that, a mission organization of a few women dedicated to that cause - no matter where or what the mission might be.

Some Highlights of our times together this year: Our Fall Missions Meeting 2019 was held on October 21, 2019 at Concord Baptist Church. We had a great time with some fantastic speakers, including Rev. Allan Morris and Mr. Ted Kandler. Ms. Sue Smith had a family emergency and was unable to attend from our Georgia State Representatives. The ladies of Concord did a wonderful job making sure everything was just perfect for our guests and our ladies and Pastors in attendance. Many thanks to all for this wonderful event. We also collected Backpacks this evening and these were delivered the next day by a 26 foot U-haul and detached truck and trailer to the North Central Missions Office. We want to thank the HBA for all of the support for this very great project! We collected 794 backpacks in 2019!

Our annual Pastor's Appreciation Spring Meeting was canceled due to the pandemic. On February 24, 2020 we hosted a WMU Directors Meeting at Friendship to share news from Georgia WMU and National WMU and make plans for our upcoming year. Our Summer Director's Meeting was canceled due to COVID, but we did meet for distribution of backpack supplies on Tuesday, September 15.

Through these meetings and discussions, we are reminded that the whole Hightower Baptist Association WMU is much more significant in our community when we are Strong Sisters together, even in times such as these. Though we are few in number, WMU is one of the consistent methods for our churches to help spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others through Missions (In 1888 and still today). Remember, being on a Mission is our Identity in Christ and not just a bunch of activities. Missions Matters Most after your salvation.

A great quote from Charles R. Swindoll says, "We are all faced with a series of great opportunities, brilliantly disguised as impossible situations." What a true statement, especially in times when some of our most popular statements have been, "I don't know"; "What can we do?"; and "When will things ever get back to normal?" Does it seem impossible to share Jesus during this pandemic? I encourage you by quoting the most beautiful Living Word of God, from Mark 10:27, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

Those impossible situations look a lot more like opportunities when you keep that verse in your heart in all things.

Share Jesus. HE MATTERS MOST.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Parson, Friendship Baptist Church, 678-427-1821, [parson@sseb.org](mailto:parson@sseb.org)  
 Deborah Sweatman, New Harmony Baptist Church  
 Vickie Wofford, Liberty Baptist Church  
 Peggy Pruitt, Coal Mountain Baptist Church

# Discipleship Training

In one of his final lessons on earth before ascending to his heavenly father it is recorded in Matthew 28:19-20 that he tells his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen." The greek word used here for teaching is matheteuo, a verb meaning to teach which comes from the word mathetes, or in the English disciple. Jesus charges his disciples here to go make more disciples by preaching and teaching in His name of the things he had taught and they had witnessed in His life, death and resurrection. Discipleship training is often thought of as a class or set of standards and instruction. However, using Jesus' teaching skills as the model it should be understood that being a disciple of Him is more than just learning a set of standards. Likewise, in the commission of teaching others, it is more than simply teaching a set of standards. It is in fact living in the commission and commandment of His teachings.

Strong disciples are essential in the furtherance of the Gospel. Paul admonishes Timothy in II Timothy 2:15 "to study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." The church should always continually strive to produce strong and grounded disciples through Sunday school, bible study groups, youth groups, and regular church attendance.

During these difficult times the committee would like to encourage the associational churches to continue their efforts of discipleship by providing opportunities for church members to engage with each other for the reason of discipleship, whether it be face to face, online through podcasts and live streaming or by providing materials or information for members to access in personal devotion and study. The platform and means for discipleship may have changed, however, the need and importance for strong discipleship has not changed since the time of Christ.

For Ever in His Service,

Brody Hughes  
Discipleship Training Committee

## Benevolence & Disaster Relief

It has definitely been a different kind of year. But it is still a blessing to work with the Benevolence and Disaster relief committee. We continue to learn how to approach needs that come our way. I would like to thank fellow committee members for their help and advice.

First and foremost, our goal is to share the good news of Jesus Christ. Secondly, we desire to help those in need of assistance within the guidelines set forth for the Benevolence and Disaster Relief Fund. Some families have fallen outside of what we provide aid for. I was able to point some of these families to social and medical programs (government and nonprofit) for various needs.

In the past year, we have assisted 27 families. The beginning balance was \$9,439.54 on September 27, 2019. We received a total of \$560 in deposits and donations. Total expenditures were \$6,159.04. The current balance as of September 28, 2020 is \$3,840.50. I would like to thank God first and foremost. I want to thank the generosity of the Association churches and members for keeping us funded. Also, I would like to thank those at the food bank that filter the needs submitted.

Rocky Dodd, Chairman  
Tony Allen  
Jerry Ridings

# **Brotherhood/Men's Mission**

No report due to COVID – 19.

## **Hightower Association History**

The History Committee had talked about sharing with the Association about the history of taking care of orphans and the Georgia Baptist Children's Home this year, but had not really worked on this. In April 2020, Rev. Ronnie McCormick called Janice Tallant and asked her if the Committee would consider doing a report on what our Association Churches are doing to carry on the Word during this pandemic. Ronnie had looked back in the Hightower Association Meeting Minutes of 1918 when the Spanish Flu had hit the United States. There was no mention of this virus in the minutes. He said that he thought it would be a good idea to place in our Hightower Association minutes what our churches did to carry the Gospel during the Covid 19 pandemic of 2020. Janice, Lanier Swafford, and Earl Groover discussed this and agreed this was important. Lanier wrote a letter that was mailed to churches and Joey Wallace sent the letter out via email two times inviting churches to share information with the committee. Here are the letters that were received. We are sure that each church in the Association has unique stories to tell. God has allowed us to develop all this technology so church could go on in times like these. We are sure many non-church goers have also tuned in to some of these services via Facebook, Mixlr, YouTube, CD's, etc. and may have accepted Jesus from the messages they heard.

It has been an honor to serve on this Hightower Association History Committee and we thank the Association for giving us this opportunity.

Janice Tallant, Lanier Swafford, and Earl Groover

### **Bethel Baptist Church Pastor, Rev. Jason Hamby**

Starting on March 22, 2020, Bethel Baptist Church suspended in person services of any type. Our Pastor recorded a message that was shared via Facebook or CD. Everyone was encouraged to stay home as many businesses have temporary closed or reduced access. No Conference was held in April 2020 due to the ongoing pandemic. The entire nation was under shelter in place orders and encouraged to stay home in efforts to reduce the COVID-19 spread. On Easter morning April 12, 2020, Bethel used a radio transmitter to allow our Pastor and Rev Sam Castleberry to hold a live Sunrise service from the porch of the Church. The service was Drive-in style with over 50 cars in the parking lot and cemetery. We did a recorded service for the 11:00 Worship Service. There were no Easter activities for the Church. Bethel's April 8th quarterly Deacon's meeting was canceled with the ongoing COVID-19 issues and the State of Georgia shelter in place order. Deacon Chair Gary Vaughters was conducting business and communicating with the Deacon Board via text message. On April 19, 2020, we began having our 11:00 worship service, our only services, Drive-in style. The services were also being recorded for CD and Facebook. We called our services "Preacher on the Porch." The same team of individuals conducted the service from inside the Church with only the Pastor going on the porch. Our Pastor continued and completed his teaching from the Book of Revelation using recorded media. A complete recording of the entire multiyear teaching was made available. May 5, 2020 the Deacons voted via text message to cancel Conference for May 2020. The Deacons postponed the Communion/Foot washing, May meeting service to the 3rd Sunday in July. There will be no meal, just the service, as we pray this will get our Revival off to a great start. Bethel obtained more foot towels so we should not need to share towels during the service. The Deacons agreed to continue the "Preacher on the Porch" services until the end of May.

Bethel Baptist Church has had an overflowing attendance at Vacation Bible School for several years prior to 2020. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 virus and the need to "social distance" from each other, VBS 2020 was postponed until 2021. May 27, 2020, the Deacons met and agreed to restart in-sanctuary services beginning the 1st Sunday in June. Face coverings, mask, and social distancing were encouraged. Bethel had not asked for offerings of money during this time and a basket was placed at the front door for offerings. June 7, 2020, the Church opened for in-person worship. The service continued to be recorded and broadcast locally using the FM transmitter. The sanctuary was about half full with many listening in the parking lot. Hand sanitizer and masks were available to encourage safety.

The Deacons agreed to restart Sunday School the first Sunday in August providing conditions are safe. Church Camp was postponed until 2021. The Deacons felt postponing was needed for the safety of our members. An unofficial alternative activity/trip is being planned for early October conditions permitting. On July 13, 2020, Member and Pastor of Sharp Mountain Baptist Church, Rev. Phillip Burt, shared with Bethel that his Church has postponed their revival. Member and Pastor of Goshen Baptist Church, Rev. Andy Wallace, stated his church was having revival services. On July 18, 2020, Bethel holds Conference with Rev. Russell Burt bringing the message as our Pastor is assisting with revival at his home church, Oak Grove. After Conference, the Deacons met to discuss the scheduled Communion/ Foot washing Service for the next day. After discussing the ongoing virus risk and practices being encouraged, the Communion/ Foot washing service was postponed indefinitely. We also agreed to remove all song books from the sanctuary to reduce spreading of the virus on the shared books. Class singing has been minimal since 'in person' worship restarted and we have continued to limit class singing to one or two songs. On July 19, 2020, Bethel began revival Sunday morning with a soul being saved. The man God had placed on our Pastor's heart to assist with the revival was exposed to the COVID virus the previous week while helping in another revival. Since he should be self-quarantining, he did not get to join us. Pastor Jason Hamby asked home preacher Rev. Andy Wallace and Jason's soon to be son-in-law Rev. Sam Castleberry to help with revival. We held our regular day and evening services each day. Attendance was great inside and outside of the sanctuary. Some evenings the sanctuary was almost full and would have been overflowing with those remaining in the parking lot. The social activities were all canceled for the week. During the week we had five souls saved, seven joined to be baptized and one by letter. Lots of hand sanitizer was used during the week and to our knowledge no infections occurred during the week. The Church was revived greatly as the Lord allowed us to complete the entire week of services. Sunday, we journeyed to Howser Mill for the Baptism. With the ongoing COVID threat and expected attendance for the 11:00 service, we conducted the entire service at the water's edge. There was a large attendance at a spirit-filled service; and many suggested we consider a new tradition of having the entire service at the water's edge each year going forward. Praise God for the safe and soul saving revival he blessed Bethel Baptist with in 2020.

Report submitted by Gary Vaughters, Church Clerk

**Castleberry Road Baptist  
Pastor, Rev. Danny R Bennett**

As Pastor of Castleberry Road Baptist Church, I never expected to experience such trying times as the Covid - 19 outbreak. It was hard but we all tried to keep our trust and faith in the leadership of The Holy Spirit. It just seemed that God kept us in the eye of the storm where there is PEACE. As Pastor I had the privilege of being a part of a Church that was not going to give up on finding ways to spread the Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and also supporting the Church with their gifts and offerings. Through all of this I can honestly say we have been so BLESSED. Watching the Church work even when we couldn't meet was AMAZING! We as a Church will continue to vow to win the lost at any cost.

Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Danny R. Bennett, Pastor of Castleberry Road Baptist Church

Debbie Payne reports: August 10, 2020: The following are the unique ways that Castleberry Road Baptist Church moved forward during the outbreak of COVID-19. These helped our church and others, as they tuned in through social media.

March 21, 2020, all church services were cancelled till further notice. We cancelled the Easter egg hunt, VBS clinics, and VBS. Beginning on April 5, 2020, CRBC began audio only via Church web page, Facebook, and YouTube. Brother Austin Mauldin sent out CD's of the services to those that didn't have access to a computer or that requested a CD. Brother William Phillips began the Adult Sunday school lesson via web page, Facebook, and YouTube. Our sign at the road was very inspirational and it gave the website where people could tune in to listen to the services and Sunday school lesson each week. Beginning on May 17, 2020 the services were live via web page, Facebook, and YouTube. Viewers increased when we began live streaming our services. Offerings and tithes were mailed to the secretary to deposit. The response was outstanding. Praise God! On June 14, 2020, church services resumed in the sanctuary. Praise the Lord!! We continued the services live via web page, Facebook, and YouTube. We mailed out CD's to the shut ins. Assistance was offered to those who could not risk being in public places during this time. We followed the recommended guidelines: social distancing and we provided mask, gloves, hand sanitizer, and

thermometer. We purchased a Fogger machine to sanitize the sanctuary and bathrooms before each service. We are so thankful no one in the church has been infected with the virus!

Thanks, Debbie Payne, CRBC Secretary

**Friendship Baptist Church of Forsyth County, Georgia**  
**Pastor, Rev. Ricky Byrd**

When Covid 19 pandemic started in the United States and began to shut down the country, Friendship at once responded to the safety warnings of the President and the CDC and other authorities and closed our “physical” church doors, but not our “heart” church doors. The Super Seniors had met on the Thursday, March 12, 2020, in the Senior Center and that was the last regular meeting in our church buildings for months. The Youth Middle School Celebration trip to Tennessee for March 13-15 was cancelled. “In person” Sunday School was cancelled on March 15, with a limited number attending church services this day.

Worship services have been held every Sunday from the church building via Facebook with our pastor, Rev. Ricky Byrd (or guest), preaching, and our Music Director, Michelle Pirkle, leading a dedicated quartet or young adult praise team, “Brothers and Sisters”, for all the online 11 a.m. Worship Services. Some of these Facebook services have had over 1000 views with people from the community and even other states commenting they enjoyed hearing the Word of God preached and glorified through song. Besides Ricky and Michelle and the singers, the media and sound team, and pianist, Joey Pirkle, have been faithful to provide our online services. The church purchased some new equipment, including a camera, during this time to enhance the delivery of these messages.

Within two weeks of the cancelled “in person” services, Friendship had set up a new web site ([www:fbcofcumming.com](http://www.fbcofcumming.com)) to establish a secure place for people to continue to send their church offerings. Offerings could also be mailed to our church treasurer, Wanda Harris. Soon the Online Giving introduced a smart phone application for even easier giving. The church purchased a commercial fogging machine to aide in proper disinfecting measures which has been used weekly since there have been people in our church. Early during the pandemic, Michelle Pirkle led a yellow ribbon challenge to area churches to tie yellow ribbons on their churches to signify that the “church” was coming home. We know that 18 area churches participated in this campaign.

Spring Revival, Easter services, Communion Services, conference services, Wednesday night youth services, Bible study, and choir services, two Ladies Bible Studies, the F M Hawkins Center Bible Study taught by Dr. Jimmy Orr, Vacation Bible School, Super Senior luncheons, Summer Revival, Ladies Night Out Event, Church Camp, and American Red Cross Blood Drives were cancelled. Members have passed away with only graveside services held for immediate family during this pandemic. No baptizing services have been held.

Some Friendship Activities that have continued through August, 2020, are: Facebook and YouTube Sunday School lessons most Sundays led by Christi Bagley; Middle School Sunday School through Zoom led by Brooke Bramblett; Middle School Zoom meetings each Wednesday night led by Gretta and Corey Fields and Leigh Parson; College/Career Classes met under the pavilion led by Trevor Evans and Gary Archer; Annie Armstrong Mission offering and Gideon’s Bible offerings were received; over 10,000 meals, frozen food, and even some furniture were delivered to the community kids while school was out through our Lunches of Love program because of generous offerings of food and money, and these boxes were delivered by a small group led by WMU Director, Leigh Parson. An Easter egg basket “drive by” was handed out to younger children by masked youth leaders just prior to Easter.

Weekly “Wednesday Encouragement” videos have been prepared by Nikki Stow and sent out by Facebook and YouTube. Originally these were started for the youth missing Wednesday night activities but very soon these were something all ages were looking forward to seeing every Wednesday morning. There were many persons from babies to ladies over 90 giving words of encouragement to all.

WMU held their monthly meetings via Zoom calls. The Pathfinders Sunday School Class held some Zoom calls. The Super Seniors were emailed (or mailed) Bible Trivial questions and weekly updates and prayer requests for a few months. Friendship Baptist Church History book was completed and sent to the printer. The college and high school classes did “drive by” caravans to go by some nearby homes of seniors. In August, the Youth Directors, Joe and Kathy

Padgett, sponsored a “back to school drive by” rally where parents were encouraged to come by the church in their cars and youth leaders prayed for them by the side of their car and gave them a little gift. The annual car show was held on August 1, 2020, with an outdoor singing and a food truck for food.

On Sunday, July 19, 2020, the church doors “were opened” back up using the recommended guidelines of the Georgia Baptist Convention and the deacons of Friendship. There would be social distancing of at least six feet, masks recommended, limited seating by “inhouse” family members, no hugs, and enter and exit by certain guidelines, with an overflow available in the Fellowship Hall if needed. As the new church year is starting, deacon meetings and other church leader meetings were conducted in September discussing ways to start back with our other groups as soon as thought safe to do so.

Respectfully submitted to Hightower Association by Rev. Ricky Byrd, Pastor; Bro. Joey Pirkle, Deacon Chairman; and Sis. Janice M Tallant, Assistant Church Clerk

**Haw Creek Baptist Church**  
**Pastor, Rev. Larry Vaughan**

Much like many of our sister churches, Haw Creek Baptist Church, made some changes in our worship services because of Covid-19. This has been a very sad time to think that we can't meet and worship with our church family. But thankfully we do have social media to help us be able to still hear the gospel preached. On March 8 we held our last normal gathering of Sunday school and worship service. On March 15 all services were cancelled for two weeks. With numbers rising in positive testing our Deacon board along with our Pastor, Bro. Larry Vaughan, decided that we would only have preaching service by means of You Tube beginning on March 29. Our sound equipment people set all this up and it was a blessing to be able to hear the gospel. We had No Sunday School, No Choir practice, No youth activities, No Spring Revival, No Easter Services, No May Meeting, No Communion Services, No VBS, and No Summer Revival. On May 17, which would have been our May Meeting, we started our “in parking-lot service”. Again thanks to the sound equipment people, Nathan & Aaron Orr, we were able to listen to the preaching service on a FM radio station in our cars. Then on June 7, we went back into the church and parking-lot & You Tube continued. The building is sanitized each week, hand sanitizer is provided and people can and do wear mask. Some of our pews are blocked off, thus complying with the 6 feet distancing. Safety precautions are followed to make it safe as possible. We continue to have parking lot service for those who do not feel comfortable gathering inside the church. This is history making times and we certainly do appreciate the Historical Committee making sure this is recorded for future generations to have this information available. Our pastor, Bro. Larry Vaughan, says “I don't like this stuff.” For the first two weeks we cancelled church all together. Then we began having preaching service recorded and played on You Tube. He said that was hard, preaching to an empty church. The Spirit was there but the people weren't. It doesn't feel right coming to church and not having choir singing, shaking hands with people or giving them a hug sometimes. But we are very thankful for the technology we have that we can still get “The Word” out to the members and the community. We are praying “this too shall end” soon.

Submitted by Benson Tate.

**Hightower Baptist Church**  
**Pastor, Rev. Ronnie McCormick**

In March of 2020, our world was shaken like we had never seen before. When schools were shut down and businesses were closed, I knew we had to have a plan in place for Hightower Baptist Church. With all of this in mind I contacted Brian Wallace who handles our media outreach and we set up a plan to go forward.

Our beginning team which consisted of Mitzi Chambers, Megan Barton, Ronnie Price, Brian Wallace, and I met on Sunday March 22 at 11:00 AM to hold our worship service via FaceBook and Mixlr. This was strange to say the least, however, God is faithful, and it was an awesome time of worship. Since that time, we have continued to move forward to keep worship services at HBC going forward. Others have come forward and helped with media, singing and other aspects of our worship. In April, we began having “Drive up Church” and I preached from the roof top of our picnic pavilion. We continued this venue for several Sundays. In May, as things began to open back up, we began to give people the option of driving up or getting out and sitting in your lawn chair. As of my writing we are still holding to this venue. In June, with revival approaching I began to pray about how we could do revival and keep everyone safe.

If the Lord ever gave me instructions, He did this time. With the help of many we held our Revival outdoors under a 40 x 80 foot tent and revival we had. HBC saw one person saved and I Baptized two into our fellowship. Special thanks to Clint Smith who stepped up and kept our Sunday School going via FB. Through all this the people of Christ, have stood united to make sure the message of hope found in Jesus, would not be stopped. God has shown His people where there is a will, there will be a way.

In Christ, Ronnie McCormick

### **Mount Tabor Baptist Church**

**Pastor, Rev. Paul Bagley**

May 29, 2020, Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:

Like all of our Sister Churches, the last few months have been a challenge. When the Covid 19 Pandemic began we were scrambling to try to determine what was the right thing to do for our church. The immediate reaction was to take a week off and see what happens. Quickly we realized that this was going to last much longer.

At this time, we decided that we would start recording a service for our members to enjoy on Facebook and YouTube. The Chairman of our Deacon Board also happens to be the most knowledgeable member when it comes to technology. He met with our singers of the church and asked them to record themselves singing special songs. Each Sunday when he would upload the sermon from the Pastor, he would attach some of the songs.

Our members seemed to really enjoy the recordings of the preaching and the singing, alike. Not only have the regular members enjoyed the recorded services, we have found out that many non-regular attendees are watching online. We have seen as many as 450 people have tuned in to weekly services. This may be an option for the future as we get back to our normal procedures.

Unfortunately, the timing of the Pandemic caused us, like many other churches, to miss Easter services. While we weren't able to gather in person, we still had a recorded Sunrise and Regular Easter service. We also didn't let the Pandemic keep us from another important tradition at Mt. Tabor and that was our annual Easter Egg hunt for the kids. One of our members created a virtual egg hunt that actually had a virtual image of our church. Not only did the kids enjoy this, but it turned into a game for all the adults too. We were all competing with each other to see who could find the most eggs. Everyone had so much fun playing along.

Now as we are at the end of May and we can see the end of this Pandemic in sight, we have made plans to postpone events like our annual Chicken Supper, VBS, and Church Camp. Our hope is to be back in Church for Summer Revival.

While we don't know what the future holds, we steadfastly put our hope and faith in the one that holds our future.

Yours in Christ, Phil Higgins, Church Clerk

### **Oak Grove Baptist Church**

**Pastor, Rev. Craig Richard**

August 3, 2020: This is a summary of services during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020.

March 22 – May 31: All in-person worship was cancelled due to the pandemic. Our Sunday School and 11am worship services were broadcast on the MixLR app and Facebook Live. Sunday School was also broadcast on 104.3 FM at 10:30 am each Sunday. Easter services (Sunrise Service, Sunday School and 11am Worship) were all held on-line. Spring Revival scheduled for April 13-15 was cancelled. VBS scheduled for early June was also cancelled.

June 7 – Present: Sunday, June 7 the doors of Oak Grove Baptist Church were opened for in-person Sunday School and worship service. All services were held in the sanctuary only and also broadcast on the MixLR app and Facebook Live. Sunday School was also broadcast on 104.3 FM. The following precautions have been observed during this time: Only the main entrance is being used to enter and exit the church. Social distancing is being observed by using every other bench for seating and maintaining a distance of 6 feet with members other than immediate family members. Masks have been recommended.

Hymns are not being sung by the choir or congregation. The church is being cleaned weekly and a disinfecting fog is used after each service. Our summer revival was held as scheduled on July 12-18 with Rev Jason Hamby and Rev. Sam Castleberry assisting our pastor, Rev. Craig Richard. All precautions listed above were observed during both morning and evening services with cleaning and disinfecting after each service. Our annual Church Camp scheduled for early August has been cancelled.

As of this writing (8/3/2020), our services continue as described above and our Deacon Board is monitoring the situation to determine when other outreach activities may be able to resume.

Respectfully, Howard Wallace – Church Clerk

Rev. Craig Richard writes: Recently, phrases that we never encountered have become almost ordinary. ‘Out of an abundance of caution’ and ‘In these unprecedented times’ are two that come to mind. It has been a great honor to see The Church move forward in the midst of the circumstances prayerfully as caution and precedent are very important. As a pastor, I have been very encouraged with the faith shown by God’s children through the last several months. Having services online has been different, but the Holy Spirit has been the same. Not having the privilege of seeing those we love every Sunday has been difficult, but their prayers, as always, have been powerful. Instead of visitation and a funeral service we had graveside services, which the Lord blessed. Weddings were smaller with just family attending, and the Holy Spirit was there. I miss many things that I once largely took for granted, but the faithfulness of our Savior is unquestionable, and He has blessed through it all. All glory to God-Rev. 5:12. He has shown His amazing grace over and over again. Though so much has been different, it is so very comforting to know our God is exactly who He says He is and has all things under control!

Rev. Craig Richard – Oak Grove Baptist Church

**Roanoke Baptist Church**  
**Pastor, Rev. Clark Watson**

Roanoke finished spring revival on Tuesday night March 17. All services after that date were cancelled until June 7th 2020. Services resumed on the 7th with Sunday school at 10:00 then worship service at 11:00. During the pandemic, services were recorded and made available through YouTube on the Roanoke Baptist Church channel.

Submitted by Sid Bramblett on June 8, 2020

**Silver City Baptist Church**  
**Pastor, Rev. Russell Burt**

Wesley Burnett sends us this report: The COVID-19 Era for Silver City Baptist Church

On February 4, 2020, the pews were moved out of the Sanctuary to the gym in order to have new carpet, paint, and lights installed. Services were scheduled to be in the gym for the next several weeks to allow for construction in the Sanctuary. COVID-19 was not foreseen and was yet to be an issue. Church services and Sunday School were held in the gym due to the construction in Sanctuary from February 16 through March 15, 2020.

Then COVID-19 became a concern. On March 22, 2020, all in-person church services cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns, federal guidance, and state guidance/recommendations. Updates/announcements about church services, recommended guidance from state and federal officials, and availability of on-line services began being sent regularly to church members via email.

On Thursday, March 26, 2020, Preacher Russell Burt preached a sermon for online availability. On March 27 & 28, our Annual Dinner Theater (church fundraiser) cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. On March 29, all in-person church services cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns, federal guidance, and state guidance/recommendations and were cancelled through the month of April including Easter Sunrise and Spring Revival. Preacher Russell Burt preached a sermon each Sunday for online availability. On April 1, the deacons began a rotating call list to keep in contact with senior members and shut-ins. Regular Deacons’ meetings were held via conference calls and group texts. On April 25, the pews were put back in the Sanctuary from gym as construction in the Sanctuary was complete.

On May 3 & 10, Drive-In Church Services were held, in order to abide by social distancing guidelines requested by state officials. May 3 would have been our May Meeting (Homecoming) with Communion and dinner on the grounds. On May 17, 24, 31, church services were held in gym for social distancing availability. Masks and hand sanitizer were made available for all who attended.

On June 7-11, Vacation Bible School was cancelled due to COVID-19. On June 21, the Church service was held in Sanctuary. On June 21-27, Morning and Evening Summer Revival Services held in the Sanctuary. Rev. Greg Hamilton and Dawson Ricketts were visiting preachers. On June 28, Baptism service was held at Shoal Creek and church service in Sanctuary.

On July 5 & 12, the church services were held in Sanctuary. On July 16-19, Church Camp at Camp Truett in Hayesville, NC was cancelled. On July 19 & 26, church services were moved back to the gym for social distancing due to the first case of COVID-19 reported in our church. On August 2 & 9, in-person church services cancelled. Several church members had tested positive for COVID-19. Danny Jarrard, ordained home-preacher, preached August 9 for online availability. On August 16, the church services were held in gym for social distancing availability. On August 23, a Baptism service was held at Shoal Creek and church service in gym for social distancing availability. On August 30, the church service was in gym for social distancing availability. We are hoping and praying to return to our church sanctuary with all services to resume in the near future.

**Liberty Baptist Church**  
**Pastor, Rev. Dennis Bottoms**

Liberty Baptist Church was unable to hold April and May conference, Spring Revival, and May meeting due to the Coronavirus Epidemic which swept the world and the USA. Due to shelter in place requirements and the impact of the virus, the deacons determined that services would be held on-line during this time. Preacher, Dennis Bottoms and Song Director/Youth Director, Kevin Woody worked tirelessly using technology to hold Sunday Services, Wednesday Bible Study, daily devotions from the church members, and special song services during this time. Bible School was also delayed till July.

Wednesday, June 3, 2020 the church met for the first time since the shelter in place order to hold a special graduation service for our graduating seniors (Bryson Broadway, Payton Goodwin, Kaselyn Martin, Kendall Martin, Justin Pass, Chase Reeves, and Marlie Townley), college grads (Jade Perry and Peyton Porter), fifth grade (Elizabeth Frix and Alexis Smallwood) and kindergarteners (Bellamy Hill, Parker Pruett, Tate Thomason, and Harlee Woffard). Frank Brown welcomed the crowd to the service on the activity field and gave words of encouragement to the graduates. Preacher Dennis preached from the book of Daniel about the courage and faith in God shown by Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abendego when faced with temptations and threats. The graduates were presented with Bibles at the end of the ceremony. It was announced that we would once again hold regular Sunday services beginning Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, on the activity field. Services in the sanctuary will begin soon, if all goes well.

Liberty held their 2020 Summer Revival July 12<sup>th</sup> through July 18<sup>th</sup>. The Corona Virus required some changes to seating and youth activities, as the church followed social distancing recommendations. Services were streamed on-line for people who did not feel comfortable attending in person. The Deacons also had the youth building prepared to show the service live, when crowds were too large for the sanctuary. At the end of the Thursday night service, Deacon Chair, Johnny Trammell stated that the Deacon's had been informed of someone contracting COVID 19 (Corona Virus). This person had attended Tuesday night's service and the deacons felt that it would be necessary to cancel the rest of the revival services and the Sunday morning service out of concern for the safety and well-being of the church family. The planned baptism for several candidates was cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date. Conference will remain open until a future service can be safely scheduled.

Church services for July 26<sup>th</sup>, August 2<sup>nd</sup>, and August 9<sup>th</sup> were cancelled because of concerns of the Coronavirus. Several members, including Preacher Dennis tested positive for the virus, with some having severe problems with pneumonia, fevers, blood clots and other symptoms.

Liberty was blessed with a message from Preacher Dennis on Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup>. He was recovering from the virus and gave a devotion from the 27<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts. Preacher Dennis shared Paul's faith and hope, as Paul spoke to the

men on the ship being tossed in a terrible storm. “I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you. For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, saying fear not Paul”. After the devotion, Preacher Dennis blessed us all by announcing that he was still led to serve Christ as Pastor of Liberty Baptist Church, if the church so desired. He then shared that daily devotions would begin again, with Cody and Amanda Appling hosting the Sunday devotion. Each person or family responsible for the daily devotion would choose the next day’s person or family to lead the next devotion.

August 16, 2020, Liberty once again held church virtually. Preacher Dennis, slowly improving from the virus and Kevin Woody worked together to hold service on-line. It was great to once again see our preacher, in our church, sharing God’s message as he read and preached from the Book of Jonah. Preacher Dennis, with assistance from Kevin Woody continued on-line for the August 23<sup>rd</sup> and August 30<sup>th</sup> services.

Sunday September 6, 2020, Liberty Baptist church met in the church building the for the first time since July 16, 2020. After the song service led by Kevin Woody, Pastor Dennis Bottoms preached from the book of Jeremiah. Pastor Bottoms revealed what the scripture says about how we should conduct ourselves as Christians. The message was very spirit felt, filled with hope in the times we are living in. After the minutes were read by Deacon Frank Brown and approved, there was a move, second and vote to close conference.

Dennis Bottoms-Pastor

Nicky Gilleland-Church Clerk

## Youth

To say our youth have experienced a year like no other would be an understatement. Our hearts have been broken over and over as we have gone Sunday after Sunday and Wednesday after Wednesday without being able to welcome our youth into the doors of our churches. However, the good fight did not cease. Our youth ministries, association wide, kept on feeding our youth though various means.

We were very blessed to be able to turn to technology as a mean of communication with our youth. Tools such as FaceTime, Zoom Meetings, and Facebook Live were vital in keeping in touch. Bible studies and Sunday School classes were taught from home. Games and times of fellowship took place via the internet. However, as time pressed on, these tools seemed to become less and less effective. The generation most prepared for an “all virtual” world became tired of staring at a screen. They seemingly became worn out, and as a result, distant.

So, what does that mean moving forward? It is the committee’s belief that in the coming months and years, we need to be more intentional than we have ever been about meeting our kids where they are. This means going to their activities and inviting them to ours. It will be vital for our students see us investing in their lives, not just at church on Sunday’s and Wednesday’s, but throughout the week.

We can take lessons from Jesus Himself. Jesus did not lock himself away in a temple or hide in a cave. Jesus was constantly seen among the people, where He taught through both actions and words. His actions proved His Godly power. His words proved His Godly compassion. Take Jesus’ words in Luke 19:5 as he spoke with one of our favorite characters to sing about, Zacchaeus- “And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.” Jesus did not wait for an invitation, He **sought out** a friend in need and with one direct statement said, “Hey man, we’re hanging out today so your better get on outta that tree.”. Are we that direct and intentional with our youth? I believe we not only should be, but further, we absolutely must be.

We have been robbed of months’ worth of time with our youth, so we must take advantage of every opportunity we have to spend leading them to the feet of Jesus, where salvation is found. To assume that these months of isolation will not have a lasting impact on our youth of all ages would be an ignorant assumption. Mentally, physically, and most

important of all Spiritually, our youth have been and will be affected. We must do our part to make them feel loved, accepted, and cared for- Just like Jesus.

May God Richly Bless You All,

Ethan Martin  
Coby Wagoner  
Heath Westray

## **Senior Adult Ministries**

Psalms 71:18 says, “now also when I am old and gray headed, O God, forsake me no, until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation and thy power to everyone to come.” KJV.

As senior adults, our work for the Lord is never done. We must endure till the very end.

As this writing, September 2020, this country has been through difficult and painful times. Since March, many seniors have become disheartened, lonely and sad due to COVID-19. Our churches, stores and businesses have closed, and we relied on our children and neighbors to help us while seniors were as to “stay in place.”

Many used this opportunity to reach out to other seniors with phone calls and cards to let them know they were not alone. We do not understand why this has occurred, but we have assurances that God is always with us. He knows our need and will supply.

While it is sad not to be with our friends and relatives in churches and rest homes, we can rely on Gods Spirit to visit and bring peace.

As a way to stay in contact with seniors in their church, many organized deacon committees to be in charge of the seniors, to ask about their needs and have prayer with them. In August, Concord Church had a senior luncheon drive-thru. With seniors staying in their cars, seeing familiar faces, praying with the pastor and receiving refreshments, it was a good time for all.

While we will not forget the year 2020, we can learn from this pandemic and grow stronger in our faith.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janis Thomas  
Bobby Early  
Les Henry

## **Music**

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness; come before his presence with singing”.

2020 has been a year of challenges and limitations that most have never experienced, nor will ever experience again. We have all experienced different ways to worship during most of 2020. Although our services have been adjusted and limited in some cases, the spirit of the Lord has been with us and he never changes.

It was amazing to see our churches react quickly and invest in technology to share services thru social media platforms. This has been an incredible outreach for those who have not been able to get back to church. We have seen a variety of churches diversify the way to share music. With singing being discouraged, most churches shared music in solos, socially distanced small groups, and virtual singing.

Our prayer is that our members will understand more today, how important our music is in our churches. Investments must be made in our youth to continue to develop music leaders and musicians for our future.

We are prayerful that we will have our singing school for 2021. As chairman of this committee, I recommend that we continue to offer scholarship opportunities and encourage our churches to provide their own scholarships to support for those who would like to participate.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chad Ackerman – Chairman  
Michelle Pirkle  
Barry Slaton

## **Deceased Members**

As another year ends for our Association, it has been a different and difficult past 6 plus months. With the COVID 19 pandemic, I have been reminded several times of two scriptures, Revelation 1:8, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty* and Revelation 22:13 says, *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last;* making me realize that God has it all under his control and I need to have more faith and trust in him.

As I look at the deceased members this past year, some deaths may be due to COVID, some to natural causes and some even a tragic loss; but no matter the cause of each one that passed this past year, they have reached their Eternal Home. John 4:2-3 says, *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*

The Association has lost a total of 200 members this year, with 1 being an Ordained Minister, 15 being Ordained Deacons and no Licensed Ministers. My prayer is that God Blesses you and your family and your Church family.

God Bless,

J. Joey Wallace  
Deceased Members Committee

# Nominations

The Nominations Committee for the Hightower Association met and after prayer nominated the following persons to serve as Chairman of their respective committees. We also selected those to serve on the Executive Committee and the preachers and alternates to preach the Introductory, Doctrinal, and Missionary Sermons for the 2021 Association Meeting.

Introductory Sermon: **Rev. Tommy Weldy**  
Doctrinal Sermon: **Dr. Scott Gilbert**  
Missionary Sermon: **Rev. Travis Bridgeman**

Alternate: **Rev. Clint Smith**  
Alternate: **Rev. Ronnie McCormick**  
Alternate: **Rev. Alex Bagley**

Executive Committee 2020 – 2022:

- 1<sup>st</sup> District: **Nathan McClure (Coal Mt.)** - 2<sup>nd</sup> District: **Michael Hill (Concord)**  
- 3<sup>rd</sup> District: **Terry Smith (Zion Hill)** - 4<sup>th</sup> District: **John Weaver (Hopewell)**

Executive Committee Chairman: **Rev. Ronnie McCormick**  
Chief Parliamentarian: **Casey Martin**

Committee Chairpersons:

1. Evangelism/Church Growth: **Don Westray**
2. Moral Issues: **Sam Rickett**
3. Sunday School: **Dr. Scott Gilbert**
4. Vacation Bible School: **William Holcomb, Chairman**  
**Clint Cowart, Asst.**
5. Women's Missionary Union: **Leigh Parson**
6. Discipleship Training: **Brody Hughes**
7. Benevolence and Disaster Relief: **Rocky Dodd**
8. Brotherhood/Men's Missions: **Jeff Hendrix**
9. Hightower History: **Janice Tallant**
10. Youth Ministries: **Ethan Martin**
11. Senior Adult Ministries: **Janice Thomas**
12. Music: **Chad Akerman**
13. Deceased Members: **Joey Wallace**
14. Nominations: **Ricky Byrd**
15. Finances: **Edwin Wilkie**
16. Queries: **Lee Gaddis**
17. Food Bank: **Paul Bagley**

Prayerfully Submitted,

**Chris Bagley, Chairman**  
**Rev. Ricky Byrd**  
**Rev. Clint Smith**

## Association Meeting Announcement

### 186<sup>th</sup> Hightower Baptist Association Meeting - 2021

**Hopewell Baptist Church, Wednesday, September 29, 2021 at 9:00 am**

## Union Meetings Announcement

### Union Meeting 2021

- 1<sup>st</sup> District: **Pleasant View Baptist Church** Friday, May 7, 2021 at 6:00 pm  
2<sup>nd</sup> District: **Bethel (Dawson) Baptist Church** Friday, May 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm  
3<sup>rd</sup> District: **Lebanon Baptist Church** Friday, May 14, 2021 at 6:00 pm  
4<sup>th</sup> District: **Cross Plains Baptist Church** Friday, June 4, 2021 at 6:00 pm

## **ALL HOST CHURCHES TO ARRANGE PROGRAMS**

**(Please provide Union Meeting minutes to Association Clerk – include date/time for next meeting in 2022)**

**The Union Meeting of the 1<sup>st</sup> District will need to provide a home for the 2022 Session of the Association.  
Churches wishing to host the Association Meeting should do so through their 2021 Union Meeting.**

# Finance

On Tuesday September 8, 2020 the Finance committee met with Association Treasurer Bro. Buddy Watson for the purpose of reviewing the financial records of the Hightower Association General Account, The Benevolence Account, The Disaster Relief Fund and the Association Food Bank Accounts.

We, the finance committee found the financial records to be current and accurate. For a detailed accounting reconciliation see the financial report from the Treasurer for each of these accounts.

We, the finance committee would like to thank Bro. Buddy for his hours of volunteer service that he devotes to the association each year in keeping of its financial records. His organization and display of records makes the job of auditing much easier.

We, the finance committee, would like to thank each Church that supports the Association's office expenses. We encourage all churches to contribute to our Association whenever possible.

Respectfully submitted,

Edwin Wilkie-Chairperson

Alan Thompson

Kenny Johnson

# Hightower Baptist Association Administration Report

## Financial Report June 30, 2020

| Balances brought forward from June 30, 2019 |                     | Expenses from 07/01/2019 to 6/30/2020 |                     |
|---|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Checking                                    | \$ 20,951.48        | GBC VILLAGE                           | \$ 1,777.00         |
|   |                     | HARLAND CHECKS                        | \$ -                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>\$ 20,951.48</b> | GBC CHILDRENS HOME                    | <b>\$ 1,777.00</b>  |
| Funds received from 7/01/2019 to 6/30/2020  |                     | CHILDRENS HOME COMM.                  | \$ -                |
| REFUNDS                                     | \$ -                | TAX PREPARER                          | \$ -                |
| GA BAPTIST CAUSES                           | \$ 3,440.00         | OFFICE SUPPLIES                       | \$ 3,986.35         |
| MINUTE SALES                                | \$ 5,465.00         |                                       |                     |
| HISTORY BOOK SALES                          | \$ 120.00           | SAWNEE EMC                            | \$ -                |
| CD SALES                                    | \$ -                | SECRETARY OF STATE                    | \$ 55.00            |
| Church Contribution                         | \$ 3,925.00         | OFFICE REPAIR                         | \$ -                |
| DONATIONS                                   | \$ -                | STATE FARM                            | \$ -                |
| FOOD BANK TRNS                              | \$ -                | LIFEWAY "website"                     | \$ -                |
| BUILDING DEPOSITS                           | \$ -                | BUILDING EXPENSES                     | \$ -                |
| <b>Total Funds Received</b>                 | <b>\$ 12,950.00</b> | CLERK EXPENSES                        | \$ 857.51           |
|   |                     | CLERKS COMPENSATION                   | \$ 5,000.00         |
|   |                     | LOAN SPEC PYT                         | \$ -                |
|   |                     | PRINTING                              | \$ 3,070.90         |
|   |                     | AT&T                                  | \$ -                |
|   |                     |                                       |                     |
|   |                     | HI-TECH "security"                    | \$ -                |
|   |                     | SEC. COMPENSATION                     | \$ -                |
|   |                     | SECRETARY EXPENSES                    | \$ -                |
|   |                     | MUSIC COMM. EXPENSES                  | \$ 132.15           |
|   |                     | VBS COMM. EXPENSES                    | \$ 343.00           |
|   |                     | DISASTER RELIEF                       | \$ -                |
|   |                     | CLOTHING BANK                         | \$ -                |
|   |                     | REVIVAL ADVERTISING                   | \$ -                |
|   |                     | D & B TRAN.                           | \$ -                |
| <b>Total Deposited</b>                      | <b>\$ 12,950.00</b> | <b>Total Expenses</b>                 | <b>\$ 16,998.91</b> |
|   |                     |                                       |                     |
|   |                     | Starting Balance                      | \$ 20,951.48        |
|   |                     | Total Funds Received                  | \$ 12,950.00        |
|   |                     | Total Expenses                        | \$ 16,998.91        |
|   |                     | <b>Checking Balance</b>               | <b>\$ 16,902.57</b> |
|   |                     |                                       |                     |
|   |                     | <b>Available Balance</b>              | <b>\$ 16,902.57</b> |
|   |                     |                                       |                     |
|   |                     | <b>Total Checking</b>                 | <b>\$ 16,902.57</b> |

## Hightower Baptist Association Food & Clothing Bank

### Financial Report June 30, 2020

| <b>Balance brought forward from July 1, 2019</b> |                     | <b>Expenses from 07/01/19 to 6/30/20</b> |                      |
|--|---------------------|--|----------------------|
| Checking   | \$182,889.17        | AT&T                                     | \$ 1,887.21          |
|  |                     | Buildings Expenses                       | \$ 5,930.05          |
|  |                     | Childrens Home Contrib                   | \$ 1,000.00          |
| <b>Funds received from 7/01/19 to 6/30/20</b>    |                     | Supplies                                 | \$ 4,557.17          |
| Member Churches                                  | \$ 37,603.47        | Food Purchases                           | \$ 35,145.30         |
| Non-Member Churches                              | \$ 200.00           | School Supplies                          | \$ 4,302.88          |
| Corporations                                     | \$ 53,455.61        | Sawnee EMC                               | \$ 8,113.00          |
| Chair Donations                                  | \$ -                | Printing                                 | \$ 288.90            |
| Individuals                                      | \$ 9,866.00         | Loan                                     | \$ -                 |
| Music CD Sales                                   | \$ -                | FC Water                                 | \$ 900.25            |
| Sunday Schools                                   | \$ 1,400.00         | Insurance                                | \$ 8,149.01          |
| Trust  | \$ 24,000.00        | Toiletries                               | \$ 6,470.56          |
| Rock-A-Thon                                      | \$ 6,770.85         | Truck Gas                                | \$ 1,075.92          |
| WMU  | \$ 875.00           | Truck Expense                            | \$ 28,833.83         |
|  |                     | Volunteer Expenses                       | \$ -                 |
| <b>Total funds Received</b>                      | <b>\$134,170.93</b> |  |                      |
|  |                     | HI-TECH                                  | \$ 150.00            |
|  |                     |  | \$ -                 |
|  |                     | Propane Gas                              | \$ 2,277.19          |
|  |                     | Zoho software                            | \$ -                 |
| Beginning Balance                                | \$182,889.17        | <b>Total Expenses</b>                    | <b>\$ 109,081.27</b> |
| Total Deposits                                   | \$134,170.93        |  |                      |
| Total Expenses                                   | \$109,081.27        |  |                      |
| <b>Ending Balance</b>                            | <b>\$207,978.83</b> |  |                      |

| <b>Hightower Baptist Association Benevolence &amp; Disaster Relief</b> |                  |  |                    |
|--|------------------|--|--------------------|
| <b>Financial Report: June 30, 2020</b>                                 |                  |  |                    |
| <b>Balance brought forward from June 30,2019</b>                       |                  | <b>Expenses from 07/01/2019 to 6/30/2020</b> |                    |
| CHECKING   | \$ 10,745.79     | ELECTRIC                                     | \$ 3,714.12        |
|  |                  | WATER  | \$ -               |
| <b>Funds Received from 7/01/19 to 6/30/2020</b>                        |                  | MEDICAL                                      | \$ -               |
| ASSOCIATION  | \$ -             | GAS  | \$ 114.17          |
| CHURCHES   | \$ 813.00        | RENT   | \$ 3,200.00        |
| INDIVIDUALS  | \$ 50.00         | PHONE  | \$ -               |
| CORPORATIONS   | \$ -             | LODGING                                      | \$ -               |
| OTHER  | \$ -             | INSURANCE                                    | \$ -               |
|  |                  | OTHER  | \$ -               |
| <b>Total Funds Received</b>  | <b>\$ 863.00</b> | <b>Total Paid Out</b>                        | <b>\$ 7,028.29</b> |
| <b>Benevolence &amp; Disaster Relief Committee</b>                     |                  | Beginning Balance                            | \$ 10,745.79       |
|  |                  | Total Deposits                               | \$ 863.00          |
|  |                  | Total Expenses                               | \$ 7,028.29        |
|  |                  | <b>Ending Balance</b>                        | <b>\$ 4,580.50</b> |

| <b>HCFB Childrens Christmas Fund</b>             |                    |  |                     |
|--|--------------------|--|---------------------|
| <b>Financial Report: June 30, 2020</b>           |                    |  |                     |
| <b>Balance brought forward from June 30,2019</b> |                    | <b>Expenses from 07/01/2019 to 6/30/2020</b> |                     |
| CHECKING   | \$ 26,924.99       | ELECTRIC                                     | \$ -                |
|  |                    | WATER  | \$ -                |
| <b>Funds Received from 7/01/19 to 6/30/2020</b>  |                    | MEDICAL                                      | \$ -                |
| ASSOCIATION                                      | \$ -               | GAS  | \$ -                |
| CHURCHES   | \$ 3,050.00        | RENT   | \$ -                |
| INDIVIDUALS                                      | \$ 5,992.14        | PHONE  | \$ -                |
| CORPORATIONS                                     | \$ -               | LODGING                                      | \$ -                |
| OTHER  | \$ -               | INSURANCE                                    | \$ -                |
|  |                    | OTHER  | \$ 1,776.18         |
| <b>Total Funds Receive</b>                       | <b>\$ 9,042.14</b> | <b>Total Paid Out</b>                        | <b>\$ 1,776.18</b>  |
|  |                    | Beginning Balance                            | \$ 26,924.99        |
|  |                    | Total Deposits                               | \$ 9,042.14         |
|  |                    | Total Expenses                               | \$ 1,776.18         |
|  |                    | <b>Ending Balance</b>                        | <b>\$ 34,190.95</b> |

# **Hightower Food and Clothing Bank**

The Year of our Lord 2020,

Another year has passed us by, The Hightower Baptist Association Food and Clothing Bank has been blessed beyond measure. The greatest blessing is the lost souls that have found Jesus Christ. If nothing else happened it would all have been worth it. However much more has happened.

We have served 4097 families. With an average of 4 people per family that's over 16,000 people that have been helped in the past 12 months. The HBAFCB has given out more than 235,460 pounds of food in the past 12 months.

I would ask that all church pastors, deacons and church members share this great news with your home church. Remember we are all members of the same church, the Church of Jesus Christ.

The HBAFCB doors are open to help those in need the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of every month. The need has increased in this area to warrant opening the Food and Clothing Bank for emergencies several more days during the month. But the work starts long before that day. Every Tuesday and Friday many volunteers continue to work; sorting clothing and linens, cleaning the building and stocking the food inventory.

This year we have faced unprecedented times and challenges with Covid 19. The many volunteers from the Hightower Association and surrounding communities have went above and beyond the call to adapt and still provide for those in need. The committee would like to give a special thanks to all that have helped this year.

Please take our need back to your churches and ask how your church can help in this mission field. May God Bless everyone!

Praising God by helping others, Your Hightower Food and Clothing Bank Committee.

Paul Bagley  
Kevin Smith  
Tommy Weldy  
Larry Newton  
Andy Wallace

## **Representative to The Georgia Baptist Convention**

In the last two years the Georgia Baptist Mission Board has undergone a major change. Dr. Robert White retired, and his successor Dr. Thomas Hammond began his tenor. Along with the change of leadership the GBC is actively trying to sell the property in Duluth and sending the staff to work remotely. The state convention has also been reorganized into six geographic regions. Each region has personnel serving in the following areas: Discipleship, Women's Ministry, Pastor Wellness, Worship and Music, Missions, Evangelism and Next Gen (Youth Ministry). The staff of the GBC is available to help our churches. One good example is the Spark Conference, which is great training for our churches in children, youth, adults, music, discipleship, and many other areas. The collaborative nature of this event is exciting and helpful.

The annual meeting of the Georgia Baptist Mission Board is November 9. Like everything in our culture, due to Covid 19 the event has been changed and numbers have been reduced for 2020. For the 2021 annual meeting, I would like to invite any of our pastors to join me at the meeting. It is a great time of worship and fellowship. The meeting also provides insight into resources that the Georgia Baptist have that can be helpful to pastors and churches. If you have questions or are interested, please reach out.

I look forward to seeing how our state convention transitions to serve our churches in the days ahead.

God Bless,

Dr. Scott Gilbert

## **Executive Committee**

The work of the Executive Committee is vital to the ongoing business of the Association. This year has been particularly challenging and unusual. The last six months have been dominated by Covid 19. This has required changes to the normal activity of our Association. My prayer is that the work of the Association will continue in spite of the unusual times we live in.

I am thankful for the members of the Executive Committee and the spirit with which our work was carried out. There were three main focuses this year that are reflected in the meeting notes that are attached. The first focus was the work of the food bank. This is one of the largest cooperative ministries that our Association host. The Executive Committee spent time with the leadership of the food bank and many of the volunteers that faithfully serve to have a greater understanding of the work and needs of the ministry. Hiring a full-time staff member for the food bank is a priority but was put on hold due to the Coronavirus. The second focus was the appointment of chair members for each committee. Over the last two years there has been much discussion over committees that are inactive other than turning in reports at the annual meeting. We would recommend looking at the activity of each committee and to determining if there are changes needed to the number of committees or the focus of committees. The desire is for each committee to meet throughout the year and to provide events, resources, or encouragement to our churches. The final focus was responding to the pandemic. This has required many changes to the calendar of activities for our Association. The Union Meetings, The VBS Clinic, WMU events and the Associational Revival were canceled this year due to concerns over the pandemic. We also made adjustments to the Associational meeting in order to keep our members safe. This also came with a recommendation from the Executive Committee to not bring any new business to the meeting other than what is necessary to keep the Association operating. This primarily focuses on making sure that Association positions and committees are filled.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to serve as the Chair of the Executive Committee. I am indebted to the members that I served alongside, for their wisdom, and guidance. I am truly thankful for the spirit of the meetings. Each individual approached the topics discussed with humility and a desire to help our Association. I pray that our Association will continue to lead people to Christ and to be a light in our communities, that there will be cooperative spirit between churches and that we will continue to work together to impact our communities for Christ.

God Bless

Dr. Scott Gilbert  
Executive Committee Chair

## **Executive Committee Meetings 2019-2020**

**November 3, 2019** (Joey absent)

Brother Casey Martin opened the meeting with prayer.

Purpose of today's meeting is to meet with the volunteers of the Food and Clothing Bank.

Brother Tim Bidy will reach out to the current volunteers to help ease the hurt feelings.

After discussion to advertise for resumes within the Associations and ways to accomplish this, brother Tim Bidy moved to post the job description on the web site followed by a second from Jon Walls. Motion passed unanimously.

Brother Tim Bidy closed in prayer.

\*\* letter from Benson Tate was shared

## **November 17, 2019**

Brother Chad Ackerman opened the meeting with prayer.

Brother Buddy Watson presented the treasures report.

The appointment of all standing committee members was appointed. Then each committee was delegated to an Executive Committee member to follow up with them and get the address and phone number and then report back to brother Joey.

Update given and discussion on the Food and Clothing Bank volunteers. After brothers Tim and Scott meet with the volunteers, it was decided best not to post the job description on the website and the Executive Committee was in agreement to slow down the process of hiring a replacement for the food bank. Brother Paul Bagley was going to discuss with brother Benson Tate his duties.

The possibility of co-chairperson for the Food and Clothing Bank and additional members on the Food and Clothing Bank Committee was discussed, followed by a move and second, with motion passing.

Brother Scott Gilbert said the 2020 Fall Association Revival would be held at Macedonia Baptist Church.

Brother Buddy Watson closed with prayer.

## **January 19, 2020**

Brother Scott Gilbert open with prayer.

Brother Buddy Watson presented the treasures report.

Brother Paul Bagley updated and shared information about the Food and Clothing Bank. Stated everything going good with a few bumps in the road. Brother Paul shared, brother Kevin Smith will be at the Food and Clothing Bank on a daily basis and be assisting Paul with all the operations. Due to brother Kevin being at the building in a daily basis, the volunteers are up, and they feel this is due to Kevin being at the building more. It was shared brother Kenny Echols donated 500 coats this winter to the food bank. Several needed pallet racks have been donated and the are being installed in the future. We only have to pay for installation which is around \$600.00. In future looking into a new freezer and will be needing a new (used) refrigeration truck soon. In closing brother Paul stated the volunteers belief "Ye Must Be Born Again" and ask that Kevin Smith be a part of the Food and Clothing Bank Committee and be given the title, Coordinator and 2 more members be added to the committee as well.

A move a second was made and passed to have the Pallet racks installed for \$600.00.

A discussion was held on the purchase of another refrigerated truck and a move and second was made and passed to purchase a new (used) truck when appropriate.

It was discussed and agreed by the EC committee to hold off a few more months on hiring someone.

A move and second was made and passed to add the title of Coordinator to Kevin Smith and he becomes part of the Food and Clothing Bank Committee.

A move and second was made and passed to add to additional committee members to the Food and Clothing Bank.

Discussion on North Central Missions ending in December and that the Hightower Baptist Association was pulling out. A move and second was made to send out a letter to this effect and passed.

This has left us without an area Mission and a move and second for brother Scott Gilbert to fill this position until October was made and passes.

Brother Scott mention the Association would be at Macedonia Baptist Church and he and Brother Terry Caylor had been discussing it.

Brother Joey Wallace closed with prayer.

**March 2020** (no in person meeting)

The decision to post phone any and all activities (non-essential) for the Association, including the Union meetings, due to the COVID 19 Pandemic were made by electronic means with the Executive Committee and Brother Scott Gilbert sent out a letter on March 31, 2020 outlining these circumstances.

**April 26, 2020**

Due to COVID 19 this meeting was cancelled.

**July 2, 2020**

Brother Scott Gilbert open with prayer.

After much discussion on how to host the Association Meeting this year, it was agreed that the meeting would be condensed with 1 sermon, no lunch served, no visitors, 1 delegate per Church and the Pastor of the Church or 1 ordained minister, and committee reports would be given to Brother Joey before the meeting and brothers Joey Wallace and Jon Walls would read the reports at the meeting. Also discussed was forgoing the Associational Revival this year. The committee was all in agreement with this and brother Scott Gilbert was to draft a letter to be sent to each Church regarding the guidelines. The letter was sent in July 2020.

Due to brother Buddy's absence, a copy of the treasures report was given to those in attendance.

Brother Ronnie McCormick closed with prayer.