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I remember a hot summer day we were having a blood drive at the church I pastored. There was a fine healthy young man that had a heavy equipment business and had been driving a dump truck for most of the day. He came in to give blood as he had other times before. During the process, he passed out. The nurse began to pat him, very forcefully on the chest and call his name. There was a wonderful lady there, who was a great prayer warrior and yet a little nervous and high strung. She said "Pastor, do something!" Most of you know I am pretty calm under pressure so I reassured her that the workers knew exactly what to do, and they did. Within a few seconds his feet were above his head, he had a cold rag on his head, and he was laughing about taking a little nap.

The reality was, I did not know what was best to do in that situation but the Red Cross workers did. How many times have Pastor's been called upon to "do something" when they may not know? Being a pastor opens yourself up to such situations because you are a servant and a shepherd. Sometimes people may call on pastors to do what they don't know how to do. Other times it may be to do things they don't want to do. I have on occasion heard: "that's what we pay the pastor to do."

The pastor is to equip the saints for ministry. God's plan was never for a professional clergy to

change the world. It has always been for the local congregation to be full of teachers, missionaries, and witnesses equipped through the pastor. They are to share in "doing the work of an evangelist" and being "His witnesses." One disturbing current trend is pastors leaving the ministry because of the pressures of Covid-19 and church issues.

Being a pastor gets tougher each day. There are the pressures to hold on to tradition and worship styles that are less attractive to the now majority generation. There are pressures associated with where the church and culture are often polar opposites. Think of all the ways Covid-19 may have affected you and realize that your pastor and his family may be affected in ways beyond those. Remember they have the responsibility of trying to minister to and help keep the church well physically during this pandemic. Let us all be patient and kind to each other. Remember your pastor often carries what seems like the weight of the world.

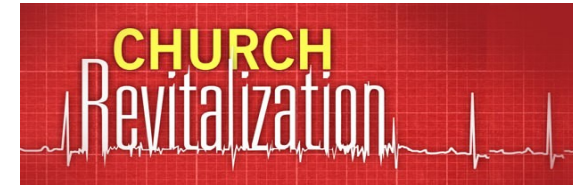
Looking forward,

Chris

Cooperative



Florence Baptist Association, March 2021



Church Revitalization is a phrase that continues to get a lot of attention in our convention of churches. Pre Covid-19, at least 80% of congregations were identified as plateaued or declining. At least 10% would be identified as "at risk congregations". In my estimation, as we have dealt with Covid-19, the situation is even more dire. What are some questions that could be asked concerning identification as an "at risk congregation"?

- Has your congregation seen active attendance decline for more than three years?
- Are you unable to attract young people and families to be active members?
- Do you feel the congregation is somehow disengaged from the surrounding neighborhood?
- Is the church in financial decline which affects outreach personnel salaried and missions giving?
- If current trends in attendance and giving continue will the church need to close within five years?

There is hope for "at risk congregations". There are three R's that most congregations would find themselves involved in:

- Revitalization – new life through change in vision and possibly leadership.
- ReStart – new life through a change in identity, leadership, and strategy.
- ReInvest – new life comes through closing with dignity and investing resources in the KINGDOM!

Your FBA staff is here to assist with helping congregations answer these questions and act upon the answers. Your Director of Missions has been through multiple trainings to help congregations deal with these difficult times. Let's start a conversation if your congregation could be identified as "at risk." Contact us for a statistical analysis and/or demographics.

Love Packages Collection... We will be collecting old SS material, Bibles (any version and in any shape) and other Christian material beginning March 8-26. Remember the FBA Office is closed on Fridays. Please box "like material" together and place in boxes NO BIGGER than a box that a ream of paper comes in. Bigger boxes are really hard to lift and the sorters struggle if the boxes are too big. If you need a complete list of what can be brought for Love Packages, please contact Louanne at the FBA office.

The CLAY SHOOT BENEFIT for Good News Clubs

April 24, 2021 from 8 am – 2 pm
Moree's Sportsman Preserve
1217 Moree Road, Society Hill SC

Cost is \$100 donation per shooter which includes one round of 100 sporting clays, lunch and door prize opportunities. There will also be a Silent Auction and for a \$20 donation there will be two opportunities to win a shotgun. First, second, third place prizes will be given in the youth and adult category as well as team prizes. Pre-registration is recommended although on-site registration will be available if space permits. Go to www.heartofthepalmetto.org for more information or to register.

LifeChangers 2021 will be June 20-25! This is for students that have completed the 7th grade on up and costs \$100 per person. Each group needs one chaperone, age 21+, for every 5 students of the same gender. Registration information has been emailed to churches and is available on our website. Registration forms and the \$50 deposit/person are due by Thursday, April 15. At this time we are planning for a normal LifeChangers, but as time gets closer, the number of registrations may be limited because of Covid, therefore registrations will be taken on first come first serve basis.

WinShape Day Camp – July 26-30, 2021

First Presbyterian, Florence
8 am – 5 pm
Children who have completed 5K through 8th grade
Cost \$219 per camper
Register online at www.winshapecamps.org

Financial Information Month of January 2021

Monthly Budget Needs:	\$19,166.67
Monthly Received:	\$19,062.34
Monthly Expenses:	\$15,920.18
Year to Date Budget:	\$230,000.00
Year to Date Received:	\$19,062.34
Year to Date Expenses:	\$15,920.18

Support Associational Missions

Think - -
3% Basic
4% Glory
5% Hallelujah

Week of Prayer for North American Missions and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering March 7-14, 2021

The
mission
moves
forward

March Birthdays

20 Rev. Shane Patrick (P), Lake City

March Anniversaries

21 David (P) & Connie George,
Cartersville



Hoffmeyer Road Baptist... Has called Rev. Bill Cogley as Associate Pastor of Worship. We welcome Bill and his wife, Trena, to our association.

