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It is unfortunate, or perhaps fortunate, that one of the things Covid has done is help to identify "At-Risk Congregations." According to Hope for Churches from the SCBC, an "At-Risk Congregation" is a congregation whose current status is vulnerable to imminent decline or closure. From plateaued to nearing closure, they are at-risk of declining influence in their community.

There are several indicators of being an At-Risk Congregation: decline in baptisms, continuing decline in attendance, the age of those who make up the congregation, financial decline, staff cuts and others. If we look at our congregations, many are full of empty seats and those that are occupied are typically those born before 1965. Often the children of those, who are in attendance, are not a part of that congregation, if any.

Gallup recently released their poll numbers which indicate in 2020 only 47% of Americans had membership in a house of worship. Before 2020, these numbers had stayed around 70%. The numbers go from 66% of those born before 1946, 58% of Baby Boomers born 1946-1964, 50 % of Gen X born 1965-1979, and 36% of Millennials born 1980-1994.

This is a trend, that is reversable, but will not be reversed without **serious change**. We are not just talking about a more contemporary worship style or coffee in the welcome center. Growth will not come

from "sheep swapping" or transfer growth. Growth will come through evangelism. This evangelism will not be door to door visitation by the pastor or the pastor and a couple more. It must feature an evangelically minded congregation that will put it into practice in their everyday lives. The church must be visible and active in the community where it is located.

The internet is full of diets, products, exercises, and gadgets that promise weight loss. Successful and sustained weight loss comes as a result of change in lifestyle. It is hard, out of the ordinary, and even painful. What we achieve is often better health, renewed energy, and perhaps longer life. These are also true of congregational change. Your physical body will decline if you continue to do what is unhealthy. Many of our congregations have declined because of continuing to do the same old things, many of which are unhealthy. Church, exercise your faith! Change your habits, for the Glory of God!

Looking forward,

Chris

Cooperative



Florence Baptist Association, May 2021



National Day of Prayer Event

**Thursday, May 6 at 12 noon
Florence County Complex
180 N. Irby Street**

**7 pm
NewSpring Church
1100 N. Cashua**

**The 2021 theme this year is,
Lord Pour Out You Love, Life, and Liberty**

**"Now the Lord is Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is liberty." 2 Corinthians 3:17**

LifeChangers 2021 will be June 20-25! We are in need of lunches for crews of 10-13 which will need to be taken to the work sites. We also need five evening meals which will be hosted at your own church. If you can help with any of this, please contact Louanne as soon as possible – 843.662.5921 or FBALouanne@sc.rr.com.

Praying for YOUR City

Resource taken from Intercessors of America <https://ifapray.org/blog/prayer-points-for-your-city/>.

When praying for your city, begin by thanking the Lord who is “guarding the city” right now! [Psalm 127:1](#) says, “Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain.”

1. Pray for Spiritual Awakening in the Churches in your City.

Pray the Scriptural prayers found in [Eph 1:15-21](#), [3:14-21](#); [Phil 1:9-11](#); [Col 1:9-12](#), [4:12](#); [1 Thes 3:10-13](#), [5:23](#); [2 Thes 1:11-12](#), [2:16-17](#), [3:1-5](#); Phil 4-6; and [Heb 13:20-21](#). When you pray these Scriptures, insert the name of congregations and assemblies in your city, asking God to bring the fullness of Jesus’ life into the church. Remember the example of Epaphras, a servant of Christ who “wrestled in prayer” for the Christians that lived in three cities – Colosse, Laodicia, and Hierapolis ([Col 4:12](#)).

2. Pray Against the Spiritual Strongholds of Darkness over your City.

[Ephesians 6:12](#) teaches of the constant spiritual battle in the heaven lies.. actual strongholds that the enemy has over geographic areas. (see also [Dan 10:10-13](#)). Command the “rulers, authorities, powers of this dark world, and the spiritual forces of evil” in the north, south, east, and west of your city to “give up” those people held in spiritual bondage (see [Is 43:5,6](#)). Praise the Lord that people will come to Jesus from the four sections of your city. ([Lk 13:29](#))

3. Pray for the Leadership and Authorities in your City

– such as the Mayor, the City Council, Police Chief, School Board, etc. (You can look up names online) – [1 Tim 2:1-4](#).

4. Ask God to Bless your City.

“Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted” – [Proverbs 11:11](#) The greatest blessing God can send is Jesus Christ, who will turn people from their wickedness, and bring them salvation. – [Acts 3:26](#).

5. Pray for the Welfare of your City.

“...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” – [Jeremiah 29:7](#)

6. Pray for the People of your City to Turn to God.

Remember what Nineveh (read [Jn 3:1-10](#)) and Samaria did ([John 4:39-42](#)).

7. Pray for Peace within your City and for the Prosperity of the City. – [Psalm 122:6,7](#)

8. Pray for your City to Support Righteousness and Goodness.

“When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices; when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.” – [Proverbs 11:10](#)

9. Pray for your City to be a Testimony of Righteousness. – [Matthew 5:14,16](#)

10. Pray that your City would recognize the time of God’s visitation. – [Luke 19:41-44](#)

Financial Information Month of March 2021

Monthly Budget Needs:	\$19,166.67
Monthly Received:	\$12,254.66
Monthly Expenses:	\$20,117.34
Year to Date Budget:	\$230,000.00
Year to Date Received:	\$52,786.82
Year to Date Expenses:	\$53,443.15

South Carolina Baptist Ministry of Aging Mother’s Day Annual Offering



SOUTH CAROLINA BAPTIST
MINISTRY ASSISTANTS
ASSOCIATION

**South Carolina Baptist
Ministry Assistants
Conference**
May 14, 2021
Calvary Baptist Church
Cost: \$50

Theme: Be Strong & Courageous
Joshua 1:9

This is an opportunity for our Ministry Assistants to be strengthened and encouraged.

May Birthdays

1	Mrs. Louanne Stewart (FBA)
1	Rev. Tom Brown, retired
1	Rev. Johnny McDaniel (P), Greenwood
9	Rev. Randy Shell, SMI
10	Rev. Travis Cook (P), Johnsonville First
11	Rev. Kendal Danford, BCM
12	Rev. Dave Bult (P), Kingsburg
29	Rev. Nathan Neighbors (MY), Ebenezer

May Anniversaries

6	Travis (P) & Holly Cook, Johnsonville First
11	Bryan (P) & Kem Chapman, Pee Dee Community
21	Bill (P) & Lila Greene, Hebron
21	Chris (FBA) & Tracy Smith



Mizpah...Is seeking a Pianist for their morning service and choir rehearsals. Interested personnel can call 843.662.6940 or send resume to mbcflorence@gmail.com

WinShape Day Camp July 26-30, 2021

First Presbyterian, Florence
8 am – 5 pm

Children who have completed 5K - 8th grade
Cost \$219 per camper

Register online at www.winshapecamps.org