**When the Church Has Left the Building**

I have seen the statements…

“The church has left the building.”

“The church is meeting in homes.”

Yes, the coronavirus has brought change to how the church is currently functioning. While the church does not need to meet in a building to function, the church is a called out people by Jesus to gather together. Unfortunately, with the order to maintain social distancing, the physical act of getting together has for the most part ceased. What then are we to do?

Fortunately, in such a time as this, we have technological tools to connect. I am so thankful we are able to have an online Sunday message. The timeless truths of God’s word can still be broadcast to the wider church. In fact, more people are seeing the message because it is online!

However, the church also needs to go small. What do I mean? We don’t need to meet in a building to function, the church is a called out people by Jesus to gather together. Unfortunately, with the order to maintain social distancing, the physical act of getting together has for the most part ceased. What then are we to do?

Fortunately, in such a time as this, we have technological tools to connect. I am so thankful we are able to have an online Sunday message. The timeless truths of God’s word can still be broadcast to the wider church. In fact, more people are seeing the message because it is online!

However, the church also needs to go small. What do I mean? We take the New Testament “one anothers” as an entire church body responsibility. For instance, Colossians 3:16 says, “Let the word of God dwell in your richly as you teach and admonish one another…”

We are to “encourage one another…” (1 Thessalonians 5:11) and “carry one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2).

This is what we are all called to do. So how can this happen in a time of “shelter in place”?

Here’s a suggestion. It’s not rocket science. In fact, some of what follows you are already doing.

However, I do ask you to share what follows with someone else, thus practicing the “one anothers.”

First identify a family, some friends, or neighbors you can connect with through the online tools at your disposal. Come to an agreement to connect with one another, if at all possible, on a daily basis.

Your group can figure out how much you want to share. It might be a sentence. It could be a paragraph. It could be a phone conversation or a Zoom gathering. You figure out what is best for who you are connecting with.

Here’s what you can share together…

**Prayer** - How can we pray for each other?

The following three questions can help guide your prayers…

*How are you doing?*

*How are you feeling?*

*What are you learning?*

**Bible** - Many of you are already reading some kind of devotional. If so, keep at it!

If you are looking for something else to read, I suggest Luke. Why? There are 24 chapters in Luke. If you read a chapter a day, you will end up at the beginning of May when Ohio Governor DeWine’s directive to stay at home ends. (Maybe?)

I strongly suggest you do more Bible reading than watching Fox News and CNN.

The 24/7 news cycle can easily feed into a sense of anxiety and worry. As you read scripture ask three questions…

*What does this say about Jesus?*

*What does this say about me?*

*What do I need to do?*

It is this third question we most often fail to ask. Information alone does not make for transformation (Romans 12:1, 2). Obedience to God’s word does. We learn by doing. For instance, I recently was looking at a recipe for peach chicken curry. It sounded good. The recipe looked wonderful. But guess what? It was not until I found myself in the kitchen, mixing ingredients, and preparing the meal that I found out what the recipe was all about. By the way, the dish was delicious!

Read scripture and then share with your group how you are attempting to practice what you were taught.

**Needs** - Share with one another if a need arises. Maybe it will be making a grocery run. Others might not be working and need some help making ends meet. If this is something your group cannot handle, contact someone on our church staff or a deacon. We are in this together!

I hope you do not look at this as something else to tack on to your life. In reality I think it is the life we’re supposed to live as the church. This is something I plan on incorporating into my daily lifestyle. You may be able to do the same.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. In the meantime, we look forward to when we can gather together physically as the church!

**Senior Pastor Evaluation**

Due to the interruption in our in-person services, the Deacons would like to extend the time for submitting an evaluation of our Senior Pastor to April 25. An email containing evaluation input on Pastor Jim King can be sent to wesleyklinger@gmail.com. (Subject: Pastor King Evaluation)

**Constitution Revision**

The Deacons have completed a Constitution update and are starting the review process among the church committees prior to submittal to the Congregation.

**Role of Women in Ministry**

The Deacons have completed a final draft describing women’s roles in ministry. This will be reviewed with the Congregation along with the revised Constitution, as they go hand in hand.

**We want to thank the Lord**

For the blessings He has given Ebenezer during this time and ask for prayers for wisdom as we plan for the future. Please contact any of the Deacons or Pastors with any needs.
Kerry Wright, Children’s Director has been attaching a file and worksheet for our children each Wednesday via a Facebook post on ‘Ebenezer Families in Christ.’ Parents, some sheets may require your help and involvement.

Pastor David Glick is leading a ‘Youth Group at Home’ series for junior high and high school students. He sends discussion questions via email and text message.

Miracle Camp news: Please go to our website at www.ebeenezermennonite.org or contact Diane Sharrock, our summer camp coordinator, at 419-302-8438 for the Miracle Camp information page and sign-up form. These forms will enable you to register your child/children for camp along with details on how to submit the form. Hopefully, these forms have all the information you need to answer your questions regarding summer camp, including refunds in case camp has to be canceled.

~ CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER REQUESTS ~

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people. - Ephesians 6:18

Elders located in area nursing homes, isolated in their rooms without visitors. Special prayer for Mennonite Memorial Home.

Persons diagnosed with and fighting the coronavirus.

Missionaries, local and around the world.

Hand soap needed: Willow Ridge of Mennonite Home Communities of Ohio is so thankful for the items we have been adding to the collection tub located on the porch of the Betty House (first house on the right on Willow Ridge Drive - across from Maple Crest). They have a need for hand soap because their supplier is currently out of stock. If you have any extra pump hand soaps at your house, please drop them in the tub. The Willow Ridge staff will disinfect them for use.

Thank you very much for the gift card to Amazon sent from Ebenezer Women’s Ministries. – Ross Zimmerman

~ GIVING ~

(During church closure due to COVID-19)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Giving for April 12-18:</th>
<th>$16,065.00</th>
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<tr>
<td>Benevolent Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Building Fund/ HVAC Project</td>
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<td>2,435.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Fund</td>
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</tbody>
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Financial health of the church: You may mail donations to the church at 8905 Columbus Grove Road, Bluffton, OH 45817. The mail is daily retrieved and processed at the church in a secure manner. You may also use our online giving tool. EasyTithe by clicking the link under Online Giving on the church webpage to get started: http://ebeenezermennonite.org/giving. If you have any questions or would like assistance, please contact Kathy Brauen at 419-234-7808. Thank you for your continued love and support of your church during this difficult time.

Wild Game Night, which had been postponed to May 9, has now been canceled. Since the church is closed at this time, the committee will schedule a Saturday after the church is open to return your tickets for a refund or return of your check. If you have any questions, please contact Kay Spallinger at 419-230-9346.

After much discussion between the church leadership and VBS committee, and the uncertainty of gathering restrictions, we have unfortunately made the tough decision to cancel Vacation Bible School for this year. We took many factors into consideration: first and foremost the health of all those involved (both children and adults), the amount of time and preparation needed to make a successful event, coordinating enough volunteers in these times of uncertainty, and the Governor’s closure of schools for the remainder of the school year. We will continue to pray for our VBS participants who we will miss out on getting to see this year, however, as restrictions are lifted and we are able to gather in larger groups, Ebenezer Mennonite Church hopes to provide some opportunities to gather together in the absence of VBS.

All are invited to join the Zoom meeting of the Living Faith Adult Bible Fellowship class. You do not have to belong to this class to join. This meeting has good attendance and adding persons every week.

Topic: My Meeting
Time: Apr 26, 2020 10:00 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Join Zoom Meeting
https://zoom.us/j/95465358416?pwd=RGJ2cEZ2YzBTnKi9JQis0M_DhkRjhEUT09
Meeting ID: 954 6535 8416
Password: 127601

~ PLEASE NOTE ~

Although the ongoing closure of our church facilities necessitates the church staff to work from home, please feel free to reach out to any of us with needs or questions you may have (see phone numbers/email addresses below). Daily security and maintenance checks continue by our custodial staff during the closure. We do want to give a shout-out to our custodians, led by Doug Messinger, as they are performing several deep-cleaning and maintenance projects during the building closure.

Please email to info@ebeenezermennonite.org or mail this form to Ebenezer Mennonite Church
8905 Columbus Grove Road, Bluffton, OH 45817
Ebenezer Communications Card
Please take a moment to complete the information below.

Name: ____________________________
Address: _________________________ State: ___ Zip ___
City: _____________________________ Phone: _________ Email: ________________________

I am interested in information on:
[ ] Ebenezer Mennonite Church  ☐ Baptism  ☐ Membership
[ ] Child dedication  ☐ Getting involved in ministry
[ ] Joining a small group  ☐ Prayer requests

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